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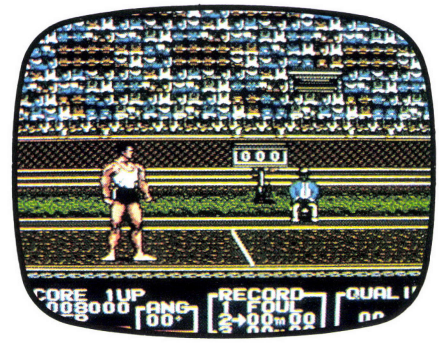


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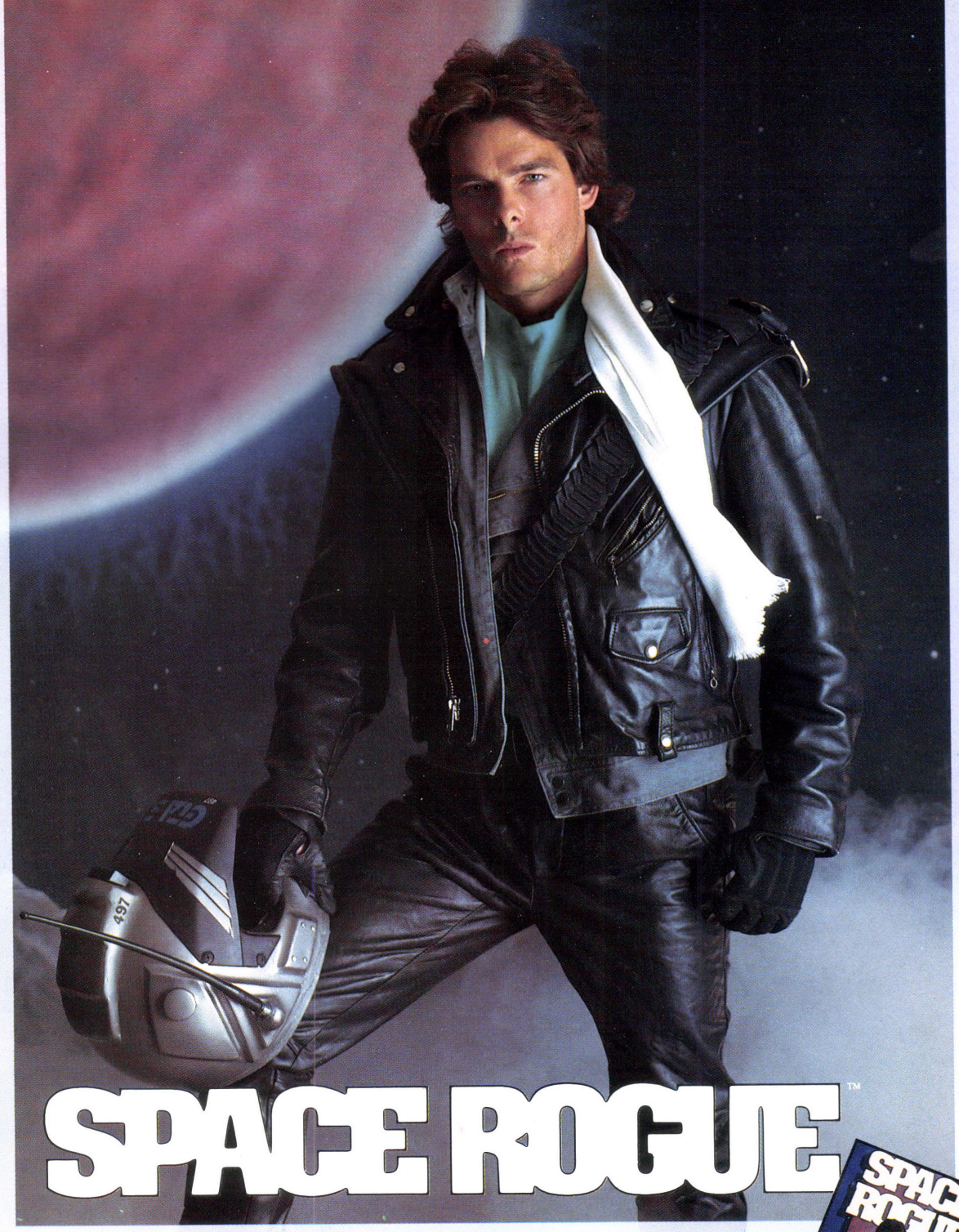
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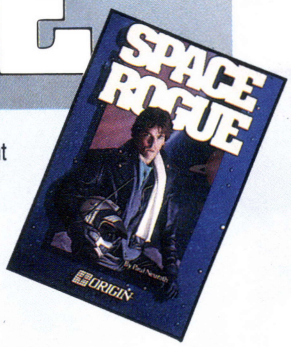
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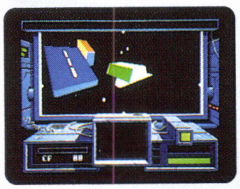
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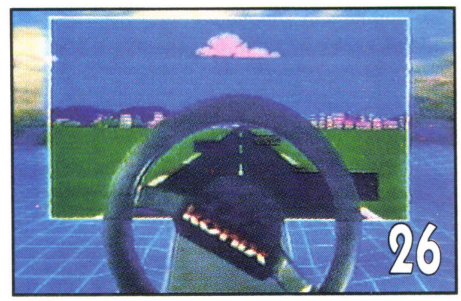
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## NOVEMBER ▼ 1989

**Cover: *Nightmare on Elm Street* star Freddy Krueger™ just loves how realistic video games have become.**

**Art: Alan Hunter**
**Models: John Berado, Norma Edwards**
**Photography: Garry Brod**


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# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Here we are sliding towards winter, but with all the *hot* video games and consoles coming out, it's hard to believe that it will be that cold for video gamers. We have so much new technology to choose from—NEC's TurboGrafx-16, Sega's Genesis, Nintendo's Game Boy and Atari's Lynx—in addition to the existing machines that have graced our living rooms for the past few years.

But there is one other machine that has been talked about recently: the Konix Multi-System. Konix may be a familiar name for some, as they are the company responsible for the creation of Epyx's joystick known as the 500XJ. (Getting a start as a joystick manufacturer on the way to becoming a computer company is nothing new, as Amiga was formerly known for their Joyboard before their computer was acquired by Commodore.) The Multi-System is being talked about as possibly the most stunning entry into the world of electronic entertainment in some time.

Though it will debut in its native United Kingdom, the Multi-System is making its entry into the pages of VG&CE thanks to a *Sneak Peek* by our special correspondant Marshal M. Rosenthal. Please turn to page 26 for the start of this exciting story.

You also might have noticed that VG&CE has become a somewhat larger magazine over the last couple of months than you've been used to. A magazine's lifeblood is its advertising, which allows for trivial things—like paying bills. VG&CE is no different, and the Christmas season has brought with it a sizable increase in ads. With that boost, we have also upped the amount of news and information we offer. After all, you wouldn't want your favorite magazine to look like a catalog, would you?

For this bonanza, we'd like to thank our long-term advertisers, as well as welcome a bunch of new companies to our pages. At the same time, there's something that we'd like you readers to do: Support the companies that you see in VG&CE, and tell them where you saw their products advertised, or use the Reader Service Card between pages 34 and 35 to get free information.

Lastly, over the next few issues, you'll see VG&CE changing little by little into a cleaner, more colorful magazine. We'll be adding more writers, more pictures and more comprehensive coverage of the electronic-gaming field. You'll get more of what you've come to expect in VG&CE: high-quality reporting, upfront reviews, fast-breaking stories and in-depth strategies.

I guess what I'm trying to say is that the video-game industry is growing, and VG&CE is going to grow with it. As always, if you have any comments or suggestions, drop us a line at VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, California 90210. We'd sure be glad to see what you think.

Now don't waste any time. Just turn the page, and let the fun begin....

**—Andy Eddy, Executive Editor**

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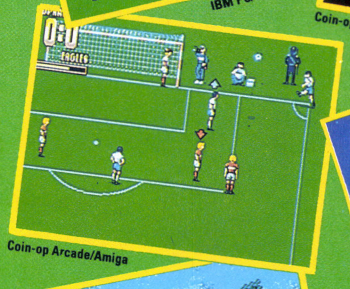
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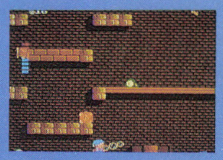

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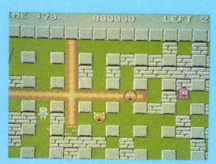
## Milon's Secret Castle

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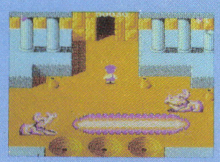
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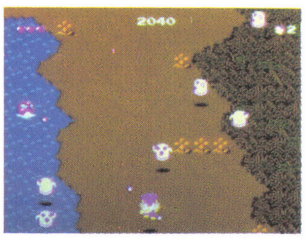
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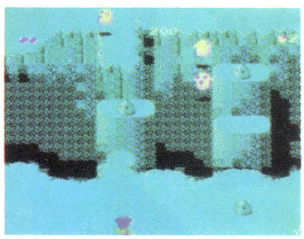
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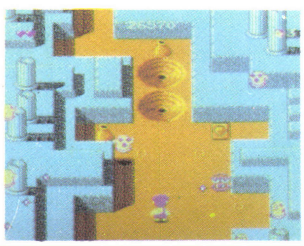


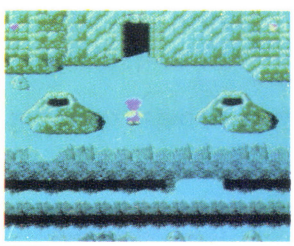


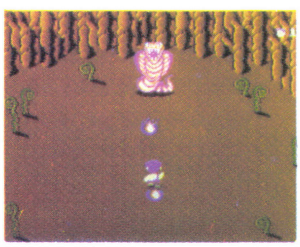
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***Play with Joycard Sansui SSS™ for maximum sound effects.***









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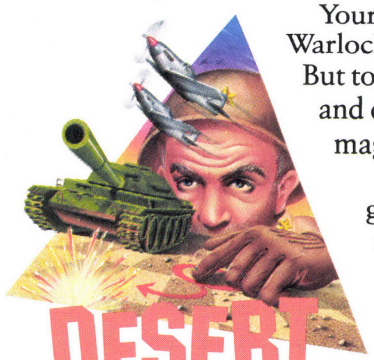

Being treated like a little kid can be a real drag. Grown-ups always telling you what to do. What to think. Like you haven't one intelligent thought of your own. Okay. So you have a few more years to grow. Doesn't mean your only interest is zapping aliens all day, running up the highest score. Sure, there was a time when you enjoyed playing simple video games designed for children. But you're older now. Smarter. You want something more. Something like a challenge. A grown-up challenge. A challenge that tests your mind, not just your wrist. Well, check out *Shadowgate*™ and *Desert Commander*™ by Kemco Seika.

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*Shadowgate* is the hottest fantasy adventure ever plugged into a Nintendo Entertainment System.® Like some of the best interactive PC games, *Shadowgate* has multiple screens of text and graphics, plus animation and sound effects. A unique "save game" function lets you continue a "lost" game without starting over.



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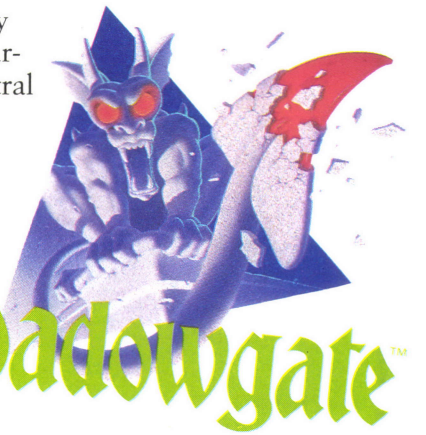
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Sure. It can be pretty embarassing. Everyone else is finally asleep. You quietly slip out of bed, tip-toe into the family room and gently insert the awaiting cartridge. When just as you're about to zap your zillionth alien onto another astral plane — flash! — the lights go on . . . You're busted. Caught red-handed and red-faced, playing yet another juvenile, one-dimensional video game.

Well, blush no more. Never again will you have to hide your passion for video game excitement and entertainment. Never again will you find yourself lamely justifying a game designed to be played by eight year olds.





Shadowgate™

**Not for Kids Only.**

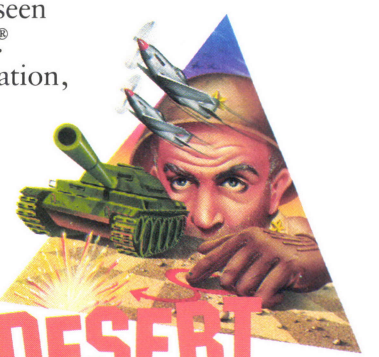
Introducing *Shadowgate*™ and *Desert Commander*™ by Kemco Seika. Not only do these two pioneering and innovative programs deliver all the fun you'd expect from one of the world's leading NES® software developers, but they also provide something extra. A challenge. A grown-up challenge. A challenge that tests the agility of your mind, not your fingers.



*Shadowgate* is the most engaging, object-oriented, interactive graphic adventure you've ever seen on a Nintendo Entertainment System.® *Shadowgate* features text and animation, multiple screens, participatory "mouse"-like controls and a special "save" function like those found in the finest PC games.

*Desert Commander* is the ultimate war strategy game that simulates realistic battle situations. With military component strengths and deployment options completely variable at five levels of combat complexity, *Desert Commander* takes the best from logistics and tactics-oriented board games and couples it with the power and versatility of a computer.



DESERT COMMANDER™

**Come Out of the Closet.**

If you're a closet Nintendo fanatic playing behind closed doors, step out and step up to Kemco Seika's *Shadowgate* and *Desert Commander*.

Because hey — you don't have to be a kid to play.

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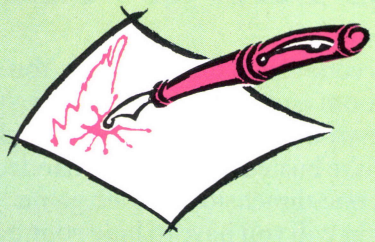
This official seal is your assurance that Nintendo® has approved the quality of this product. Always look for this seal when buying games and accessories to ensure complete compatibility with your Nintendo Entertainment System.®

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CIRCLE #106 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

# READER MAIL



## COMPLIMENTS PLUS

Dear VG&CE:

My compliments on an outstanding magazine. As a dedicated GA (game addict) and reader of your top-quality magazine, I just want to say that no other magazine can fit in your shoes.

I just finished reading the July issue, and it's a hot one! Thank you very much for mapping out *R-Type* and *Zelda II*. They have really helped me in my gaming. The review of the TurboGrafx-16 was also great; Lee H. Pappas and Andy Eddy really did a great job.

One flaw, though, was located on page 82. The article was "Commanding Carrier Command"; a very good article. As an owner of an Amiga, it really gave me some strategic advice. But the picture shown is *not* of *Carrier Command*. Rather it is a picture of the game *SkyChase*.

Other than that, your magazine is tremendous! Keep doing the excellent job that you are.

**—Marcel Martin**
**LaPlace, Louisiana**

*Thanks for the kind words, Marcel. (Gee, are our shoes that big?) And thanks also for pointing out that photo error. You are right: The picture is from Maxis'* SkyChase. *Our apologies for the slipup.*

## WHERE IS PARKER BROTHERS?

Dear VG&CE:

Your magazine is the best ever made! I enjoy reading it, especially the Sega articles. My favorite article was "Sega Shows Off Their Stuff" (VG&CE, July 1989). However, there was one mistake on the licensee report: You forgot Parker Brothers, whose games include *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?, Kings Quest* and *Montezuma's Revenge*. Other than that your article was exact.

**—Brian Girard**
**Springfield, Illinois**

*Well, Brian, in a sense you are correct, but while Parker Brothers started their relationship with the Sega Master System as a licensee, they are currently marketing their products directly through Sega/Tonka.*

## EGG ON OUR FACES

Dear VG&CE:

In the July issue article, "Electronic Pennant Fever," *Championship Baseball*, by Gamestar, was inaccurately referred to as "no longer in production."

For the record, *Championship Baseball* is still very much alive and well. It is in active production as part of Gamestar's Solid Gold line and retails typically for less than $10. Not only is it a great game, it's at a great price too.

**—Greg Suarez**
**Marketing Coordinator, Gamestar**
**Menlo Park, California**

*Please accept our apologies for that mistake, Greg. We hold out our wrist for a well-deserved slapping.*

## OWNS THEM BOTH

Dear VG&CE:

Congratulations on your success. Your magazine barely stays on the magazine racks around here.

Your reviews and tips are wonderful, and I especially enjoy *News Bits*. I like to keep on top of what's going on in the video-gaming industry. I'm 16 years old and own both an NES and a Sega Master System. Between the two I have about 84 games, so you can see why your magazine is so important to me! It helps me pick the best games and beat them later on.

Thanks a lot, and keep up the good work!

**—Chris Slate**
**Archdale, North Carolina**

*That's quite a selection of games you have, Chris. We're glad that* VG&CE *can help you keep up to date, so you can make better decisions when you buy.*

## HOT, HOTTER, HOTTEST

Dear VG&CE:

I just got done reading the July mag. Wow! I was so inspired I just have to write and tell you that this magazine is the best ever. I loved the Sega Genesis sneak peek, Sega's CES showing and the R-Type strategy guide.

With the introduction of the new generation machines, it looks as if the video-game world is only going to get *hotter*. Continue to stay on top of all the news and keep up the good work!

**—Dirk Graves**
**Trent, South Dakota**

*We feel the same way you do, Dirk. The video-game market is taking a big step forward with the new game machines—not only the home machines like Genesis and TurboGrafx-16, but the handheld versions also, like Game Boy and Lynx. In fact, the concept of playing arcade-quality games at home is bolstered by the fact that a company*

# THUNDERCADE™

Terrorism has reached new heights. AATOM (Atomic Age Terrorist Organization of Miracali) has constructed its own nuclear power plant, and threatens the world with atomic terror.

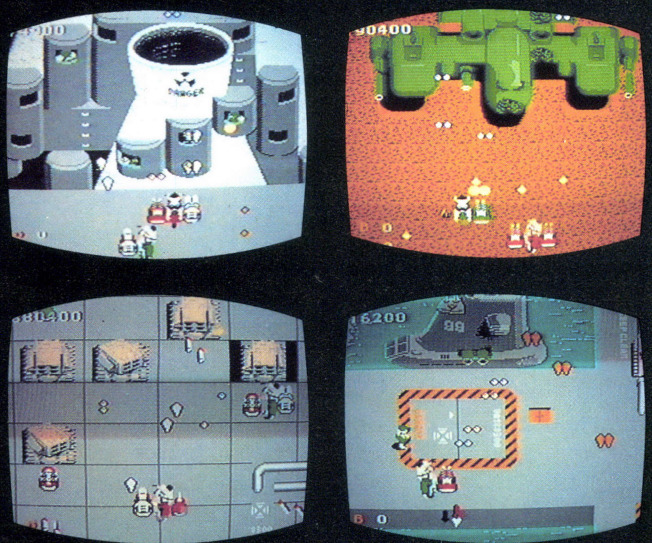
The world powers have decided to initiate operation THUNDERCADE to stop AATOM. Equipped with a high-performance combat motorcycle, sidecar cannons, and backed by a precision B-7 bomber, you set out on your dangerous mission.

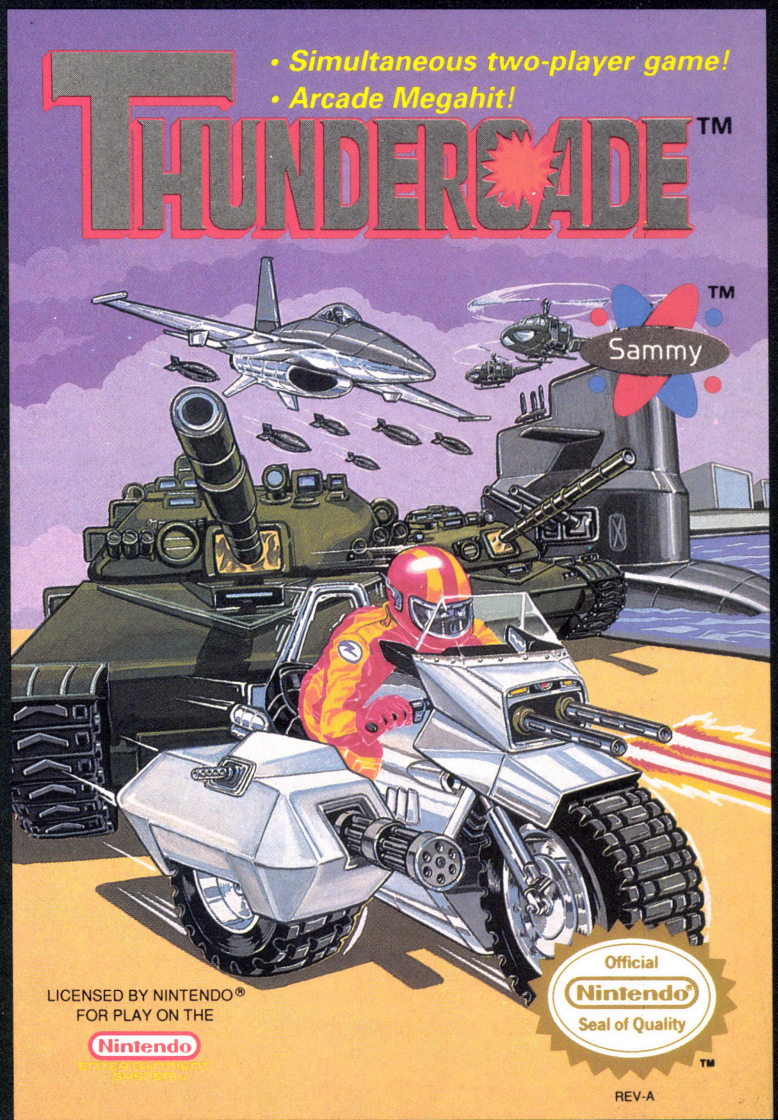
Start in the city streets and continue through bases, woodlands and the fortress before reaching the heavily guarded nuclear power plant.

With a hit-miss ratio display at the end of each stage, you can improve your attack efficiency.

Have a friend join in and save the world together!

Go for the challenge!!!





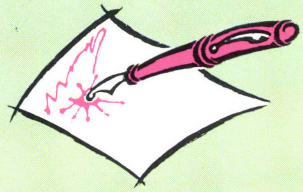

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**CIRCLE #107 ON READER SERVICE CARD.**



*called United Amusements is going to be manufacturing coin-operated games using the TurboGrafx-16 as the hardware. That certainly demonstrates the power that the TurboGrafx-16 contains. We'll have more on this story in a future issue.*

*As you can see on page 26, we are also looking to what machines may influence our electronic entertainment in the future. The Konix Multi-System is one such example, and we are hearing some rumblings from other companies with "next generation" products that should make their way to the pages of* VG&CE *in the coming year.*

## ANOTHER FORM OF ANTICIPATION

Dear VG&CE:

I want to take some time out to congratulate you on your magazine. I really like all of the maps you have to help us newcomers.

The review for the TurboGrafx-16 in the July issue is spectacular and so was your May issue review of the U-FORCE.

Just a question or two—first off, in your July issue, you reviewed *Anticipation*. In the beginning of the review, you said that it was "one of the most unique games available for the NES," but as I read further it seemed as though there were many more disadvantages than advantages.

Second of all, why do Nintendo Game Paks cost so much money? After all, the chip is worth about $2 and the plastic covering about $3.

Thank you for printing *the* best mag around.

**—Jason W. Cohen**
**Kew Gardens, New York**

*Thank you for reading* VG&CE, *Jason. It certainly seems like you are getting your money's worth!*

*I'll do what I can to answer your questions. First,* Anticipation *is, indeed, a unique game, because there aren't any others that require you to interact the way this one does. Also, it appeals to all ages and encourages a group of people to play it, rather than just one player. On the other hand, the reviewer's feelings were that* Anticipation *suffers from some other problems: primarily that two people sharing a controller is awkward and that some of the picture puzzles are "bizarre." Chris Bieniek's review is a good example of how we at* VG&CE *handle reviews: We try to provide a complete overview of the pluses and minuses in a game. While he recommends* Anticipation*, he also notes that some problems keep it from being a perfect NES cartridge.*

*Regarding cartridge costs, there were a few considerations other than just the cartridge itself that you forgot to mention. You have to think about the costs of creating a game—programming, graphics and sound creation—packaging, shipping to the store, advertising and even the price of offices and employee salaries. In the NES market, there is another consideration which comes in the form of some sort of licensing fee to Nintendo. Though this isn't public knowledge, it is thought to raise the cost of a cart about five to ten dollars.*

## CAN'T SAY ENOUGH ABOUT VG&CE

Dear VG&CE:

Here's to the best gaming magazine ever. It may have been a bit rough for the first few issues, but you've blasted off and haven't looked back.

This letter was inspired by your July issue with the exciting story on the TurboGrafx-16 and Color Dreams. Here are my opinions from beginning to end:

Cover: A terribly elegant statement.

Advertising: Eye-popping.

*Editor's Letter*: My first stop.

*Reader Mail*: Always informative.

*News Bits*: The little something extra.

"The NEC TurboGrafx-16": So beautiful I almost cried.

"Sega Shows Off Their New Stuff": Very nicely done, but *Wanted* from Sega stinks. With games like *Spellcaster*, *Wonder Boy III*, *Basketball Nightmare*, *Passing Shot* (better than *Racket Attack*), *Dynamite Dux*, *Captain Silver*, *Cloud Master*, *Galaxy Force*, *James Bond* and decent (as well as constant) advertising in gaming magazines and TV, they could blow Nintendo's action/adventure games to. . .well, you know where. *Altered Beast* on the SMS looks better than on the Mega Drive. I think NEC will be *the* 16-bit gaming system like Nintendo is for the 8-bits.

"Color Dreams": What can I say? I own an IBM-compatible and can't wait for their NES games.

Reviews: The only section I don't like—it's way too long. Most everyone knows about these games and can make up their own minds.

"Mastering R-Type": I loved it.

*Easter Eggs*: I've read almost all of them months ago.

*Zelda II*: Wonderful review, even though I've already played through it.

*Electronic Pennant Fever*: The article was nice, but I personally hate baseball.

"Taking a Spin With Don Mattrick": I love your interviews with game authors.

*Game Doctor*: Sheer enlightenment; refreshing.

Your magazine is fabulous, and I could go for a biweekly run, seriously.

**—Lance Rice**
**Jasper, Alabama**

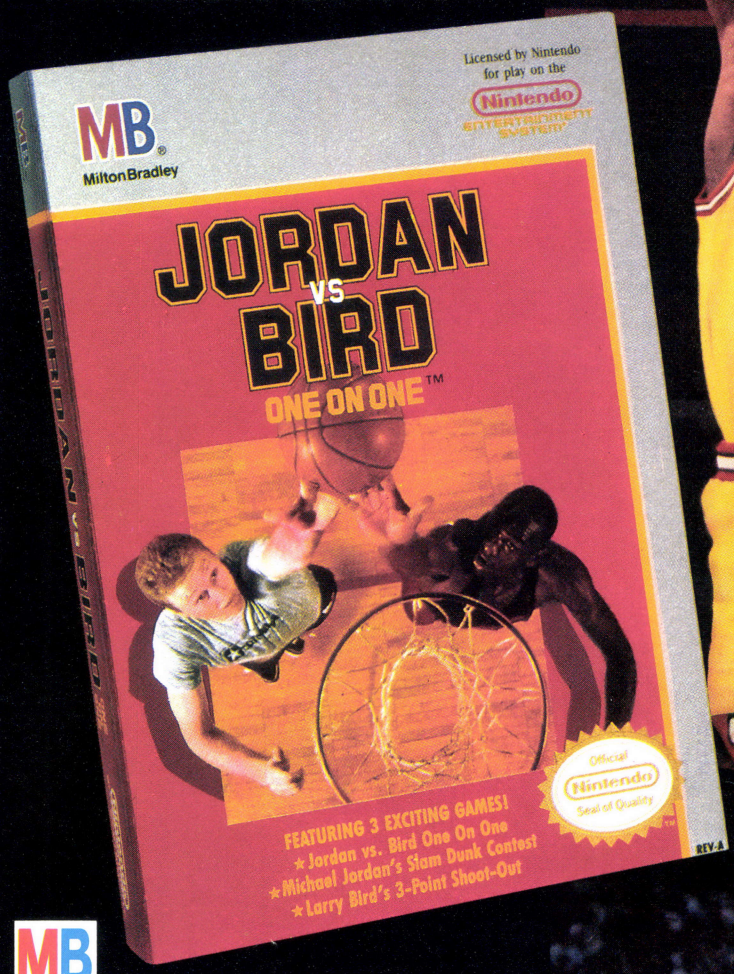
*Lance, what more can we say except thanks for your comments. We do read every letter that comes through here and consider each idea when we think about changes to make in the magazine. In fact, we'll be making some alterations to* VG&CE *that we think will really help the overall look of the magazine. We'll talk more about it in the next issue.*

## CORRECTION

In the July *Easter Eggs*, our hint for *Metroid* is a bit misleading. After entering the password JUSTIN BAILEY, you need to fill the bottom row with spaces or dashes (-) for it to work properly.

# JORDAN VS. BIRD

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- MICHAEL JORDAN'S SLAM DUNK CONTEST
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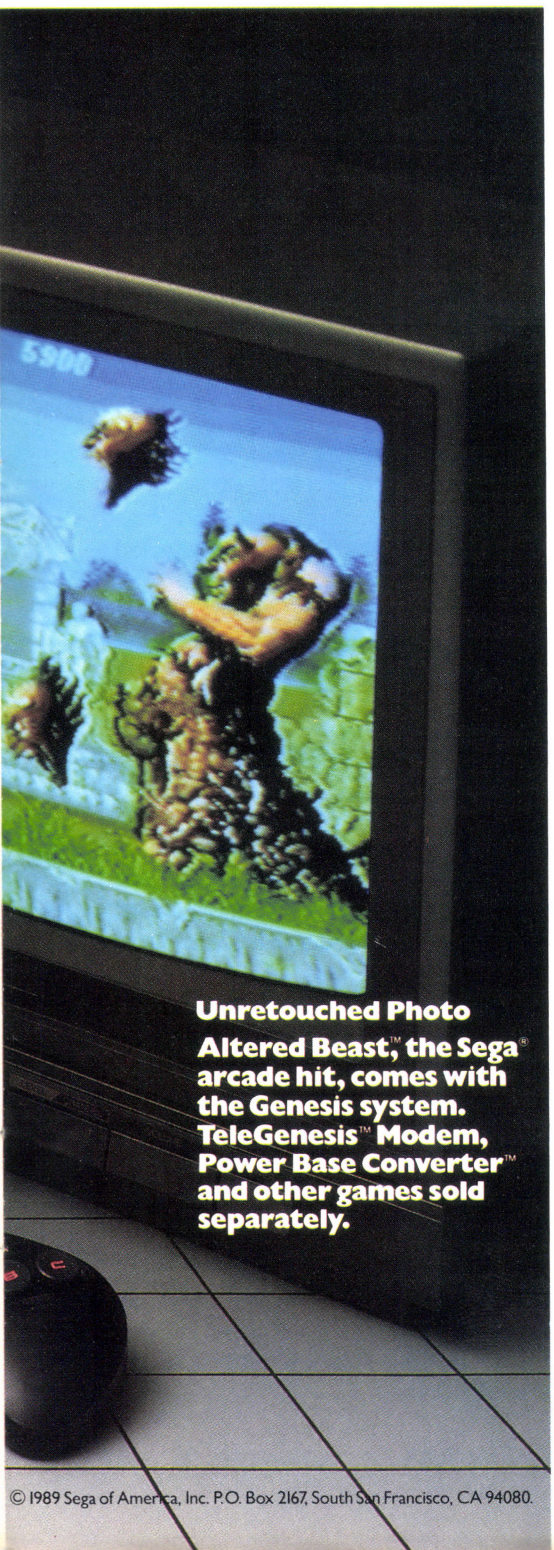
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TeleGenesis Modem and Games: These products are planned for future availability, and are sold separately. Each player needs a Genesis console, TeleGenesis modem and TeleGenesis game cartridge to play.

# WORLD BE THE SAME.



**Unretouched Photo**
**Altered Beast,™ the Sega® arcade hit, comes with the Genesis system. TeleGenesis™ Modem, Power Base Converter™ and other games sold separately.**

**Genesis® 16-bit. The ultimate dimension in game play.**

For the first time, the powerful technology used in arcade games has come home to let you play games that look, sound and play exactly like they do in the arcade.

Genesis brings games alive with vivid high-definition graphics. Voices, sounds and music so true they turn the game into a reality you can feel. Plug in a pair of headphones for stereo sound that surrounds you. And soon, with the TeleGenesis™ modem, you'll be able to play against friends in other cities. Or across town.

The incredible reality of Genesis could only be brought to you by Sega,® the master of arcade entertainment. Creator of arcade block-busters like Out-Run,™ Altered Beast,™ Thunder Blade,™ Afterburner,™ Zaxxon™ and Shinobi.™

The power has been unleashed. The adventure begins. And this is just the beginning of the Genesis era.



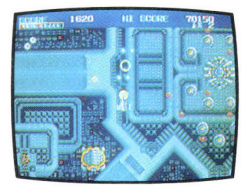
**Soccer**



**Forgotten World™**



**Tommy Lasorda Baseball™**



**Thunder Force II™**



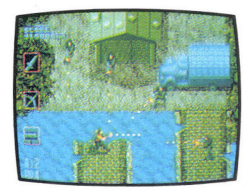
**Arnold Palmer Tournament Golf.™**



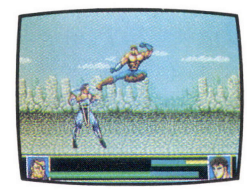
**Hollo Fighter™**



**Ghouls 'n Ghosts™**



**Rambo III®**



**Last Battle™**

**And more to come.**

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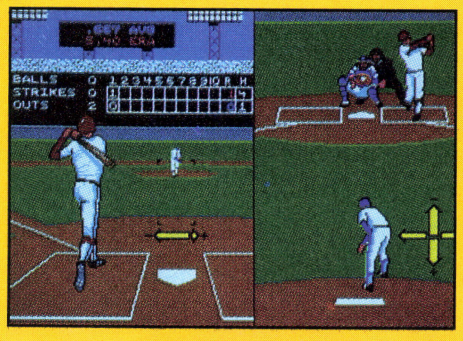
# NEWS BITS

Compiled by Joyce Worley

## Sports Celebrities Endorse Games

Virgin Mastertronics has acquired endorsements for new sports games from three celebrity sports figures. This is a continuation of the company's policy of obtaining stars to promote their top game releases. The company's lineup of big names already includes Magic Johnson (*Magic Johnson's Basketball*) and John Elway (*John Elway's Quarterback*), spokesmen for programs under the Melbourne House label.

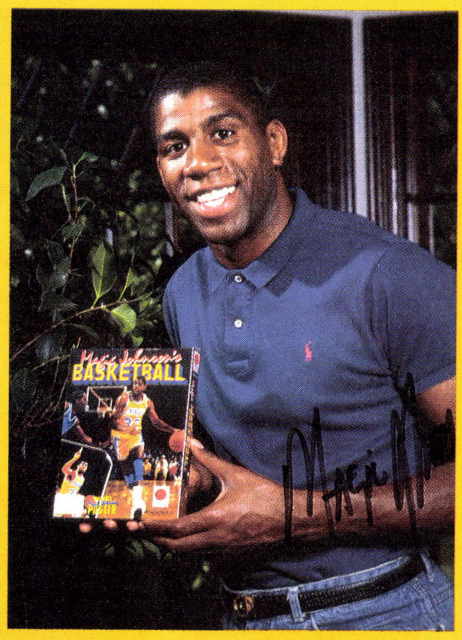
Dodgers' pitcher Orel Hershiser is the figurehead for the home-computer version of

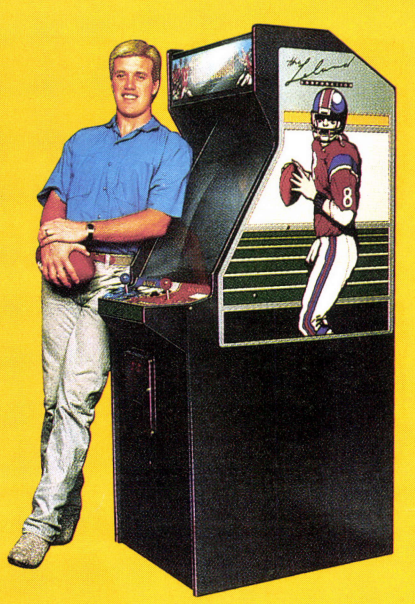



the most popular coin-op arcade baseball game of all time. *Orel Hershiser's Strike Zone* will be available for play on Commodore and IBM PC computers this year.

Captain Rick Davis, of the U.S. World Cup Soccer team and the U.S. Olympic team, endorsed the computer version of *World Trophy Soccer* (a coin-op game introduced to arcades this summer). *Rick Davis' World Trophy Soccer* will be available for home play on the Amiga, Atari ST, Commodore 64 and IBM PC.

Greg Norman (known as "The Great White Shark" in the golfing world) is the inspiration for *Shark Attack: Greg Norman's Ultimate Golf*. Versions of the game are currently under development for Amiga, Atari ST, Commodore 64 and IBM PC.



## Cinemaware Spotlights Giveaway

Cinemaware's two-pronged Consumer Incentive Program has something for everyone. When a purchaser sends in a registration card, it is entered into the Cinemaware monthly drawing. The more registration cards submitted, the greater the odds of being picked. Each month the winner gets to choose any product from the current Cinemaware or Spotlight software line, with no restrictions.

Each Cinemaware or Spotlight game is also packed with a treasure ticket. Seven tickets give the collector a gift certificate worth $20, ten tickets gets a certificate worth $25 and 14 tickets provides a $50 gift certificate. Tickets are to be "spent" in the Cinemaware gift catalog of all-family items, such as tools, appliances, camping gear, toys, luggage, sporting goods, etc.

## *Go* Gets Graphics for Laptops

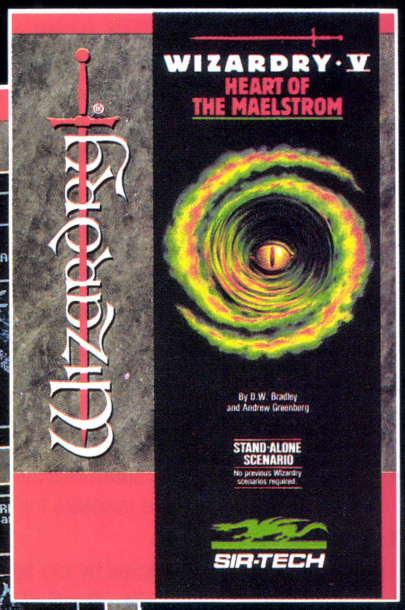
The latest version of *Cosmos*, the award-winning *Go* program from Ishi, has added a few features to enhance play and included a special laptop graphics mode for laptop PCs.

The new program plays much faster than previous versions. It also improves the save game feature and adds a Joseki tutorial online. (Joseki is part of an opening move, taking place within the corners of the board.) With the tutorial, players can explore various combinations of moves, without affecting the regular game.

Go is an ancient Japanese game of strategy and global warfare. *Cosmos* has 100 levels of play, online rules and teaching hints and a choice of board sizes. It is available for play on IBM PC.

# WIZARDRY·V

## HEART OF THE MAELSTROM




### LOSE YOURSELF IN A NEW GENERATION OF WIZARDRY!

**The Legacy Continues ...**

Despite the greatest magic of the ancient High Sages, great floods, earthquakes and famine again pervade the land of Llylgamyn. The great Orb of L'Kbreth, an artifact of remarkable power that has protected the city for generations, is powerless to halt the scourge.

But now, the Sages have discovered that the hidden reason is deeper and more frightening than the worst of these disasters. To save the very world as we know it, you, and your intrepid party must rush headlong into the ...

**Heart of the Maelstrom**

*Heart of the Maelstrom* is a complete revision of the Wizardry Gaming System, with more story and game depth than ever before. You may create your own party of adventurers, or use characters from other Wizardry scenarios. In this new world of Wizardry, you will find:

**New Mazes**

More than twice the size of previous scenarios, with larger monster pictures, magical pools, buried treasure, locked doors and much, much more.

**New Abilities**

Thief and Ninja characters that can hide, then ambush unsuspecting monsters. Spellcasters can conjure monsters to fight for your party.

**New Spells**

Over 40 brand new spells, 60 in all. A unique and totally new magic system.

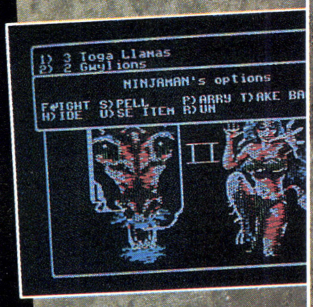
**New Combat System**

Diabolical monsters with more deadly abilities than ever before, and an arsenal of ranged weapons and new combat situations will test your strategic powers as well as your strength.

**New Monster Encounters**

Converse, buy, sell, trade, steal, or stand and fight in a dungeon filled with real characters.

*For the most exciting experience available in fantasy role-playing, enter Heart of the Maelstrom!*










*Screens from Apple II version of the game. Screens for other systems may vary.*

**STAND-ALONE SCENARIO**

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**Now available for:**

- Apple II Series (5¼ inch only)
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Wizardry

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## EA to Distribute Lucasfilm Games

Lucasfilm Games entered into an agreement with Electronic Arts which gives that company exclusive distribution rights to all Lucasfilm entertainment software in the U.S. and Canada. EA will assume responsibility for manufacturing, sales and distribution of all the Lucasfilm titles, including *Maniac Mansion, Battlehawks 1942* and *Zak McKracken and the Alien Mindbenders*.

The distribution agreement also includes Lucasfilm's 1989 lineup of games, including *Loom*, their first fantasy adventure. *Loom*, featuring high-res 3-D graphics and set in a mythical time when shepherds, blacksmiths and glassmakers rule the world, uses no text commands or menus and is controlled instead by icons and music. It will be available for Amiga, Atari ST and IBM PC.

Other Lucasfilm titles affected by the agreement are *Their Finest Hour: The Battle of Britain* (an air combat simulator that lets players fly both German and British missions) and two games based on the Lucasfilm/Paramount movie *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*.




## Developers Shake Hands on CDI Project

Robert Botch and Robert Ogden of Bay Area Design and Development (BADD) have announced they will create consumer products for CDI.

In a meeting with Tom Lopez, chairman of Mammoth MicroProductions, Inc., BADD agreed to participate in a project that will use the technology developed by Mammoth for entertainment products.

Lopez, formerly with Activision, explained that the optical disk technology used by his company was on display at the summer Consumer Electronics Show. It was on view in the Sony booth, where the 1989 Sony products catalog was presented on CDI. The veteran gamesman discussed the future of CDI and its impact on home entertainment and said the agreement with BADD was a significant step on the road to new styles of games which will be playable on compact disk.

## What Is Japan Playing?

Arcaders in the island nation spent their yen on some hot videos this past summer. According to *Game Machine Magazine*, the top coin-grabber video-cocktail models are *Tetris* from Sega and *Master Weapon* from Taito. Japan's two top upright and cockpit machines are *Final Lap* by Namco and *Hard Drivin'* by Atari. Finally, the top pinballs (as of June 15, 1989) in Japan are *Truck Stop* by Bally Midway and *Banzai Run* by Williams.

## Memorex Offers Free Disks, File Box

Memorex Computer Supplies is currently offering free computer supplies in a promotional giveaway. Purchase of a standard ten-pack of 5¼-inch, double-sided, double-density disks entitles the buyer to receive two free Memorex color disks by mail. A coupon for the freebies is in Memorex boxes marked with a special yellow sticker.

The second Memorex giveaway promotion offers a free 3½-inch disk box with the purchase of ten color 3½-inch disks or a 5¼-inch file box with color disks in that size. No coupons to return on this offer; the disks are packed inside the free file boxes.

Both offers are good only while supplies last but should be available in most retail outlets through the gift-giving season.

## *Dinosaurs* Come Back With Free Software

American Educational Computer (AEC) has a bonus for purchasers of *Return of the Dinosaurs*. The lizard library is being packaged with a mail-in offer that lets the computerist receive a free copy of one of AEC's *A+/MatchMaker* programs.

The computerist can select the learning program that seems most helpful. Each of the fourteen *A+/MatchMaker* educational programs is based on curriculum materials taught in school. Topics include vocabulary, grammar, U.S. and world geography, U.S. and world history, government, biology, French, German, Spanish and science for various grade levels. The programs are similarly constructed. Each contains 35 ten-question lessons, simple graphics and editing features to add more material.

*Return of the Dinosaurs* is equally educational, but the learning is masked behind an entertaining premise. A crack in time is allowing dinosaurs to enter your hometown. Each must be located, identified and returned to its proper time and place. Players decipher clues about the characteristics of each species while the program teaches them a lot of facts about the large lizards. It also provides a practical lesson in how to use a database.

*Return of the Dinosaurs* is available for Apple II, Apple IIGS and IBM PC formats.

## New Commissioner for Micro League

Micro League Sports Association named Neil Swartz as president and announced expansion plans for the company's line of sports-simulation games. Barry Morstain, the founder of Micro League, will concentrate his efforts solely on research and development.

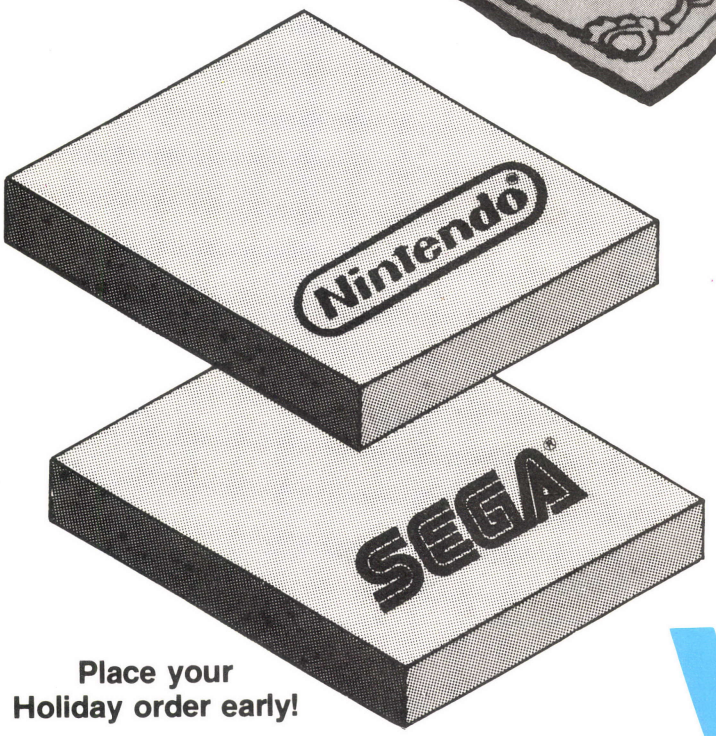
Swartz explained the company's gaming philosophy in a statement to the press: "Although we produce software, we are primarily a sports company using the medium of computers to make simulating a sporting event as easy as spectating a sport, except you the fan, with your knowledge, can change the outcome."

Swartz further defined the style of gaming he sees as Micro League's niche: "Our games allow players to strategize and plan their moves. . . . This makes it perfect for the true sports fanatic, someone who knows they can do a better job managing their favorite team, or at least better than the current manager."

The new president announced that *Micro League Baseball II* will be available this Christmas for the Macintosh, Atari ST and IBM PC. (The original game, *Micro League Baseball*, is programmed for Apple, Atari XL and Commodore 64.) *Micro League WWF Wrestling* is also expanding system availability, and additional match disks (with different pairings of mat men) are currently under development.

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## Video Replay INC.

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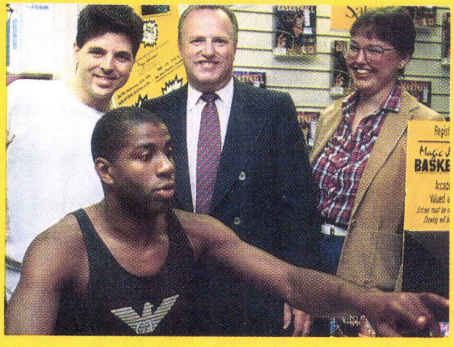
CIRCLE #111 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

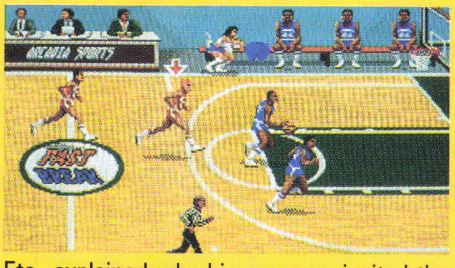
## Magic Scores at Software, Etc.

The Software, Etc. store at Del Amo Fashion Center in Torrance, California, experienced some "magic" demonstrations when NBA star "Magic" Johnson put in a two-hour appearance.

Earvin "Magic" Johnson, designated NBA's Most Valuable Player of 1989, was in the software store to sign autographs and demonstrate *Magic Johnson's Basketball*. The game, from Melbourne House Software, is a side-perspective, arcade-action basketball simulation featuring excellent animation.

Jordan Levy, vice-president of Software,





Etc., explained why his company invited the big man to the store: "This is another one of our programs to stage the most exciting and impact-full promotions in the software industry. . . . Having Magic appear live in our store will introduce hundreds of new buyers to the Software, Etc. environment and to the 4,000 products that we offer."

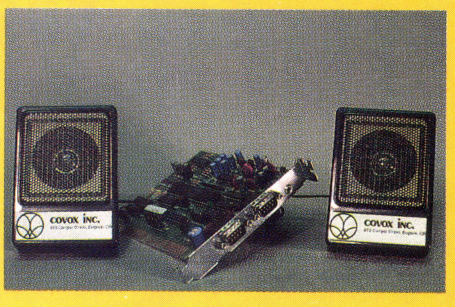
Software, Etc. is currently the largest discount software retailer in the U.S., with more than 225 stores in 39 states.

## PC Sound/Game Board Gains Industry Support

The recently introduced Covox Sound Master PC is gaining support from software developers and publishers since its introduction by the Eugene, Oregon, company earlier this year. The low-priced, music- and sound-enhancement card for PCs supports speech and sound through a direct memory access driven 8-bit digitizer.

According to Mark Stewart, Covox vice-president of marketing, the Sound Master PC allows sound files to operate in conjunction with moving graphics. The system works with IBM-PC/XT/AT/386, PS/2 models 25 and 30 and compatibles. An on-board chip provides three-voice capability for multi-part music and special effects in stereo.

Several major publishers, including Electronic Arts, Broderbund, MicroProse and Lucasfilm, are expected to release game products soon which utilize the Sound Master.




The Sound Master PC comes with dual speakers, connecting cables, a user manual and software. The board is easily installed into any available slot, with speaker jack and joystick ports accessible through the rear mounting bracket. It retails for $89.95, direct from Covox.

## Top Coin-Ops of July 1989

Figures courtesy of Replay Magazine, based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.

### Best Upright Videos

1. *Hard Drivin'* by Atari
2. *Off Road* by Leland
3. *Operation Thunderbolt* by Taito
4. *Mechanized Attack* by SNK
5. *Arch Rivals* by Bally Midway
6. *Turbo Out Run* by Sega
7. *Strider* by Capcom
8. *Narc* by Williams
9. *Chase H.Q.* by Taito
10. *Final Lap* by Atari

### Best Coin-Op Software

1. *Golden Axe* by Sega
2. *Bottom of the Ninth* by Konami
3. *Ninja Gaiden* by Tecmo
4. *Splatterhouse* by Sharp Image
5. *U.S. Classic* by Taito
6. *Cabal* by Fabtek
7. *Hippodrome* by Data East
8. *Wrestle War* by Sega
9. *Nastar Warrior* by Taito
10. *Tetris* by Atari



### Best New Uprights

1. *Sly Spy* by Data East
2. *Escape the Planet* by Atari
3. *Crackdown* by Sega
4. *WWF Superstars* by Amer. Technos
5. *Final Blow* by Romstar



## Clues for Heroes

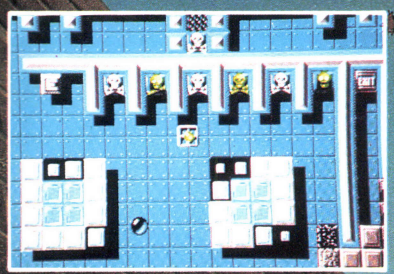
Strategic Simulations, Inc. has just what's needed to make heroes out of faltering adventurers. The Advanced Dungeons & Dragons *Heroes of the Lance Clue Book* provides a complete set of maps of the passageways, including the sewers, the maze and the three levels. There are also listings of monster types and what to use to defeat each. The list of treasures defines what is available, as well as what type of magic (if any) the item produces Suggestions on the safest paths, tactics and other information included make it easier to reach the final treasure. A short story about *The Dragonlance Saga*, written by James M. Ward, completes the booklet.

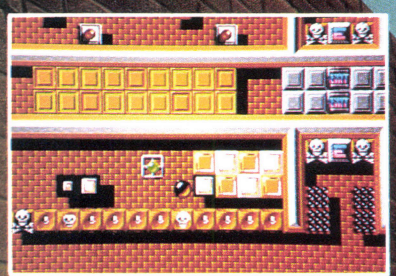
According to SSI spokespersons, the *Heroes of the Lance Clue Book* is helpful even to experienced gamers, since it contains point-value listings and character-attribute descriptions which are very valuable while adventuring.

*Heroes of the Lance* is currently available for play on Amiga, Atari ST, Commodore 64 and IBM PC computers. The *Clue Book* is available for $6.95 at most retailers or can be ordered from Electronic Arts at (800) 245-4525.

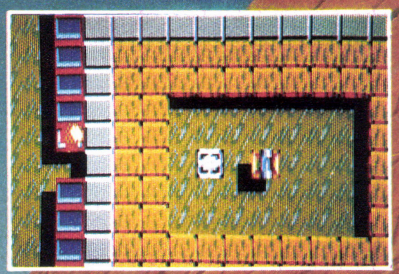
# TITAN

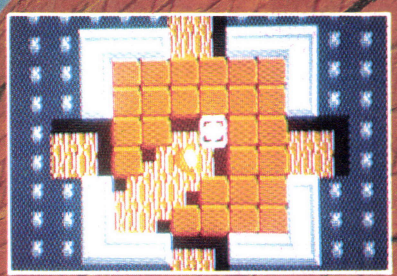
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## *Hot Circuits* Opens in N.Y.C.



The American Museum of the Moving Image, located in Astoria Queens, New York, inaugurated a new 6,200-square-foot exhibit space with a special exhibit of coin-op games. The display, titled "Hot Circuits, a Video Arcade," tracks the 18-year history of video games.

"Hot Circuits, a Video Arcade" is the first major museum exhibit of arcade-style gaming. Historic machines on display include the very first coin-op video game, *Computer Space*, by Nutting, originally released in 1971. Also present is Atari's 1972 *Pong*, the first major arcade hit which attracted thousands of new players into gaming parlors. The collection on display includes 45 other games, such as Cinematronic's *World Series* (1986), Atari's *Missile Command* (1980), Stern's *Berzerk* (1980) and Gremlin's *Head On* (1979). Some of the other famous titles on display are Exidy's *Death Race*, Williams' *Defender*, Gottlieb's *Q*Bert* and Sega's *Frogger*, as well as more modern titles like *Hard Drivin'* and *Double Dragon*.

Most of the games on display can be played. Visitors to the museum receive five specially-minted gaming tokens (engraved with the "Hot Circuits, a Video Arcade" logo), and additional tokens are available for purchase.

Rochelle Slovin, the museum's director, organized "Hot Circuits." At the opening ceremonies, Ms. Slovin remarked on the ironic role arcade games have had: "Alternately praised for introducing advanced technology to a wide public and criticized for the corruption of American youth, the video game is here recognized as occupying a unique middle ground between television, the home computer and the penny arcade."

Explaining why The American Museum of the Moving Image decided to feature an exhibit of coin-op entertainments, Slovin said: "The video game has an important place in a museum like ours, that's about the moving image, because of its connection to earlier interactive moving image forms like the kinetoscope and the mutoscope. It is also significant that video games created a vast new source of revenue for the entertainment industry. Some observers have suggested that by making us familiar with computers, the video game contributed to the acceptance of the home personal computer."

Roger Sharpe, director of marketing for Williams' Electronics Games and widely recognized as the world's leading historical writer about arcade games, selected the units for the display. Sharpe used as his criteria for inclusion a combination of imagination, popularity and technical innovation. The games are arranged in categories, such as mazes, sports simulations, driving simulations and projectile-firing games. A wall-mounted descriptive text accompanies each machine, prepared by John Berton, of the Ohio Supercomputer Graphics Project. Experts are also available on the exhibit floor with information and even some player hints.

The American Museum of the Moving Image opened in September 1988 as part of the historic Astoria Studios Complex in Queens, New York. It is the first museum in the U.S. devoted to the art, history and technology of motion pictures, television and video. "Hot Circuits" will be on display until November 26, 1989.

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## TurboGrafx Goes Coin-Op




NEC's TurboGrafx-16 game system is providing technology for use in future coin snatchers. The coin version of the state-of-the-art video game will be sold in kit form directly to operators. Ken Wirt, vice-president of NEC Home Electronics (USA), estimated the significance of the move: "NEC's move into the arcade-game market will change the video-game market."

NEC Home Electronics (USA) entered into an agreement with United Amusements (UA) to distribute the TurboGrafx-16 game system to coin-op operators in a move that may substantially alter the number of new games players can expect to see. The TurboGrafx-16 system, which can be installed in coin-op cabinets in less than two hours, is supported by TurboCard game cards costing from $50 to $200 each, so a new entertainment can be ready to play in minutes. According to UA spokesmen, this is far below the cost of conventional coin-op software.

In a related story, United Amusements has agreed to distribute TurboGrafx-16 coin-op kits to United Artists Theater Amusements (UATA), a group that operates games in approximately 700 theater lobbies. UATA will convert 40% of its coin-op cabinets to the new system. Jon Daugherty, president of UATA, remarked on the change, saying, "TurboGrafx-16 will revolutionize the coin-op business through a constant flow of fresh new games at affordable prices."

Just Games also will use the video-game system in arcade locations. Fred Gillman, president of Just Games, expressed his enthusiasm: "TurboGrafx-16 is the best thing that has happened to this industry since the days of *PacMan*." Gillman plans to place the 16-bit video-game technology in his coin-op machines located in colleges, bowling alleys and military installations.

NEC plans to introduce nine new software titles with the coin-op system and expects between six and ten additional games to be available by the end of the year.



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# The Konix Multi-System Game Console

by Marshal M. Rosenthal

It's a cold, wet day in southern Wales as we drive past the Black Mountains—the landscape bleak, recovering from the days of savage strip mining. We've traveled all day and passed many a village, only to encounter road signs in Welsh, which made progress near impossible. "It's just another game console," we grumble. "Why go to all this trouble?" But it's too late to turn back, and there ahead of us is the industrial park home of Konix.

We are greeted by the company president, Wyn Holloway. Escorting us up to his office, Holloway comments on how "nice" the weather is today. (We shudder to think what a bad day might be like.) He rings for tea as we sit down. Anticipating our questioning look, he starts the story:

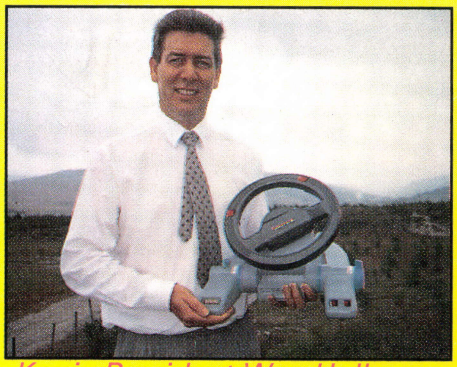
"I was a carpenter by trade, not planning to become involved in computers or the like at all. But I used to hang around computer stores, play games like others of course—and eventually ran a computer club where you could come in and try out the games and game equipment.

"I began to notice just how terribly bad the joysticks were, people would come in and complain how quickly they broke for one thing. I decided to make one that fitted the hand, one that was comfortable to use and solid enough to take abuse. The results were quite nicely accepted, and Konix was born. Epyx sells it in the States by the way. It's called the Ergonomic 500XJ."

Holloway pauses and takes a sip of the tea just placed before him. He continues: "We've had good success making various kinds of joysticks—including unconventional types to simulate racing-car wheels and for flying planes. But we got to thinking about game systems, how to make better joysticks that would pull the player in the game—gaming is huge here in Europe you see.

"We were in contact with a company working on a new game console. We consolidated with them and began to rework the electronics and adapt them to meet our needs; a game system designed around the concept of real control, one truly playable. The result is the Konix Multi-System."

Again anticipating our



Konix President Wyn Holloway

All photos© 1989 Marshal M. Rosenthal NYC

request, Holloway gestures us out of the office and into a small conference room. Lying on the table is a large, massive peripheral shaped like the steering wheel section of a coin-op game. We ask where the cord is for connecting to the console, and Holloway laughs— "That *is* the game console!"

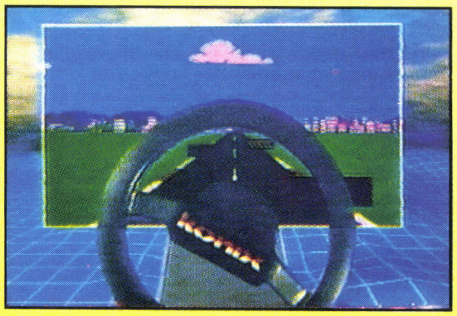
It's not tiny or light—but a hefty, substantial device. The steering wheel comes off and the remaining handles resemble the yoke of an airplane. It's easy to see how the yoke can be moved up and down like that on a real plane to simulate how a pilot would climb or dive an airplane *while* steering.

Holloway flips each of the handles, and now they're the steering bars of a motorcycle. We also notice buttons placed on the bars and a shift lever on the lower-right side. "For activating functions and shifting gears," explains Holloway. He also points to a small, corded foot pad which is used for those games requiring brakes and pedals.

On the front of the unit rides a 3 1/2-inch disk drive. Complaining of yet another format brings the following response from Holloway. "Yes, we could have made it to use cartridges, but consider how expensive that would be. Software needs to be kept down in price to sell successfully, and disks are an easy and highly acceptable medium." Holloway also points out that it's not easy going against such heavy hitters as Nintendo and Sega, who own the cartridge field—which is why a disk-based system can do well.

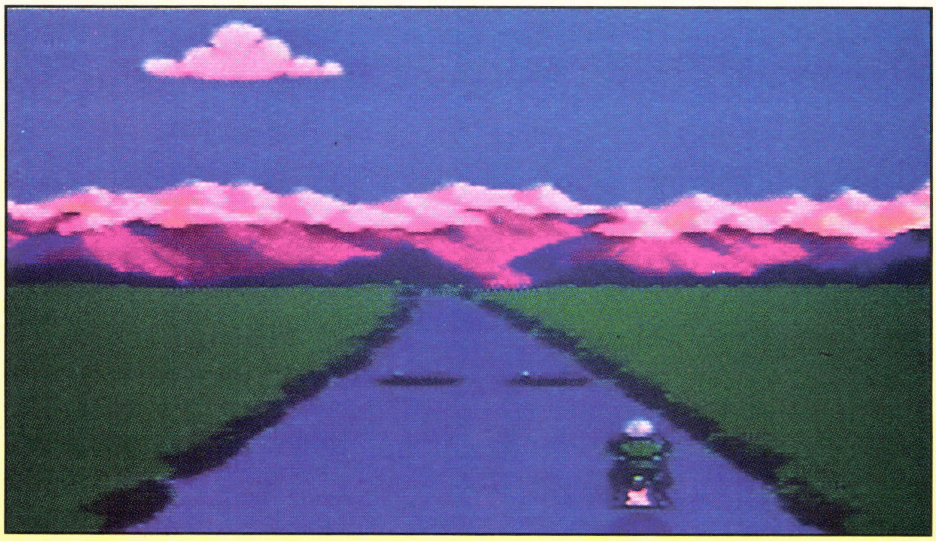


*The Konix Car in action*

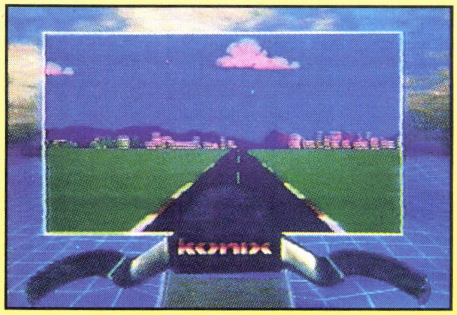


There's an ominously shrouded shape draped in the corner. Holding our curiosity in check for the time being, we ask just what the Konix Multi-System has going for it? "First off, there is the design," says Holloway. "I believe in entering the fantasy of gaming—of playing and doing things not possible in the real world. That's why arcade games like *Space Harrier* do so well in the arcades. Having a controller that doesn't interfere with that desire is vital, and here we have one that enhances the game play.

"Now for the internal bits," smiles Holloway. "The machine uses an 8086 processor—of RISC [Reduced Instruction Set Chip] technology with a 32-bit ASIC custom processor that is being downgraded for 16-bit action (but ready for upgrades in the future). There's a special blitter chip as well for moving objects around quickly. Combine this with 256 colors on-screen from a palette of 4,096 and you can see how interesting games can become. There are RGB and RF outputs for viewing the image, plus CD quality sound with 40 distinct channels possible, or 20 in stereo. Of course, there are also outputs to play the sound through a home stereo unit.



The Konix Cycle hits the road



"We expect our system to be in the stores by late September, and to do quite nicely in price as well—retailing for about £200." (This translates to approximately $300 U.S.) Holloway admits that availability in the States is still unknown, but American gamers should be able to get one in the early part of 1990.

(Konix has been talking to various U.S. companies, such as Mattel and Disney, about distributing the Multi-System in America. The system is expected to debut at the 1990 summer Consumer Electronics Show with a retail price of approximately $250.)

Our brains are reeling from all of this, but there's more to behold. Holloway approaches the shrouded shape. "We started Konix as a joystick-peripheral company, and that continues in the philosophy of the Multi-System," he says. "We will also have a light gun, but with a difference: It will feature a recoil to give greater realism and also have attachments for making it into a rifle. A key pad will attach for accessing numeric commands as well. We're even considering a skiing-type rocker pad you can stand on. But I know that you'll want to see this."

Not trying to be nosy, there's one thing that we still wonder about sitting under a cloth in another part of the room. With a flourish, Holloway removes the shroud. "Behold the *chair*!" he proclaims. This is hard to believe; a peripheral consisting of a motorized chair. "It will allow the same kind of movements found in arcades," says Holloway. "The prototype you see here moves along both the X and Y axes, but only some four inches in any direction for the sake of safety." Holloway points to a front shelf where the Multi-System is mounted and shows how there is also room for a monitor or small television.

Getting on is similar to being astride a hobby horse, though with firmer back support. Holloway activates the motors and the chair rotates around, making satisfactory "thrumming" sounds as it does so. The entire Multi-System (with monitor) moves in perfect sync, so this would be a killer for flight simulations. "You can imagine the popularity of anyone who has one of these," smiles Holloway. He expects the chair to be available before the end of the year and to retail for about £250 (approximately $375 U.S.).

Hopping off, we ask about the games to be available. "We've had tremendous response from the European software houses," says Holloway, "and most of them will be producing games for our system. [Retail will be about £15 or approximately $25 U.S.] We expect to have some 100 titles out during the first year, and most games will be a megabyte in strength.

# FACE THE FIRE

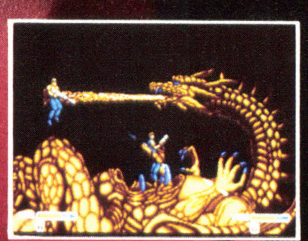
*Weapons of fury.*

*It's the next century in FORGOTTEN WORLDS, and you're the only one left who can save Mother Earth from savage aliens. Your space-age weaponry is awesome but so are your obstacles! Armed with an anti-gravity device you can fly through enemy defenses and eradicate the alien bases. But watch out! Missiles, monsters, dragons, robots and laser guns are bombarding you from every direction!*

*If you're ready to save Earth's defenseless men, women and children, see your favorite software retailer or call Capcom U.S.A. at 408-727-1665*



*There's havoc in the factory as you blast away the invaders.*



*The Bronze Dragon is a formidable foe. You never know when it will strike!*

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There will be some multi-disk games as well." Holloway gleefully points out that the Multi-System is a whiz when it comes to doing solid 3-D imaging: "One of the software house's programmers said that it knocked his socks off."

Speaking of programs and programmers, Jeff Minter is lurking about. Minter is one of the all-stars of British software, with programmming efforts dating back to the advent of the Commodore VIC-20, predecessor to the C-64. He's not the type of person you can ignore; long brown hair, intense eyes, a sharp wit—all rolled into a package that seems just a tad over 6' 2" tall.

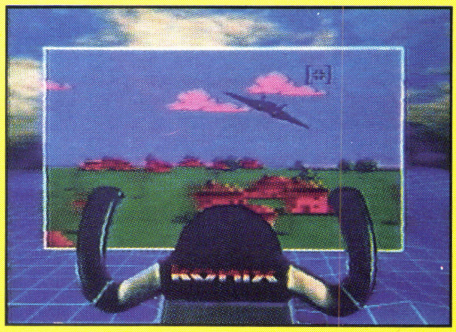
Minter's games have all become "set" in European history: *Grid Runner* and *Attack of the Mutant Camels* being two worth noting. Both are based on a solid theme of fast action and great sound. In fact, Minter recently turned out *Super Grid Runner* for the Atari ST, which features some of the best sound effects that the ST's little old Yamaha chip ever turned out.

*Attack of the Mutant Camels* places you in a fighter that takes on wave after wave of giant camels, the purpose being to blow them up as they saunter toward you. Other unusual products have included *Colourspace* and *Trip-A-Thon*. Both create light shows on the computer screen, with *Trip-A-Thon* (on the Atari ST) adding massive personal control and involvement plus MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) capabilities.

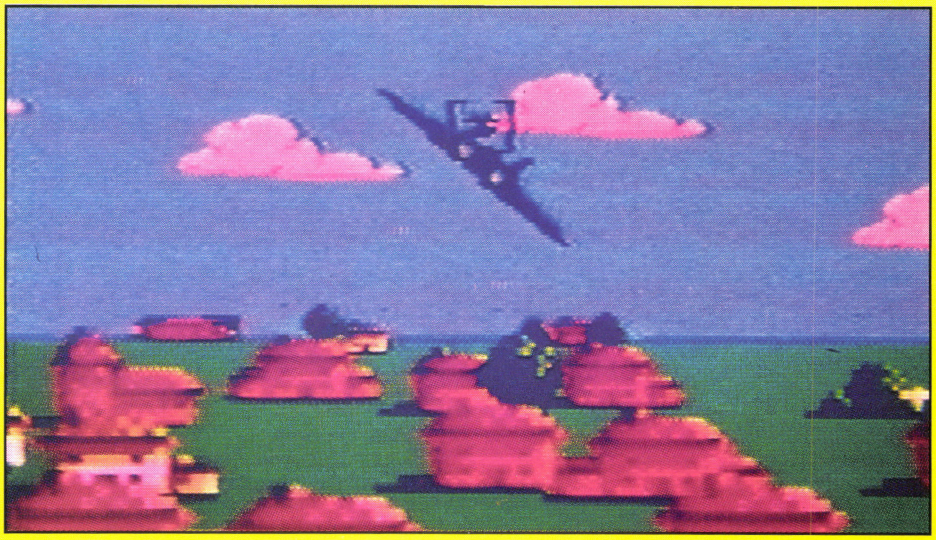
Probably his most famous trademark is the llama, which turns up in some form or another in every game (his software house is called Llamasoft). We take the opportunity to ask if he's involved in developing for the Multi-System. "Absolutely," he replies. "I'm coming out with an enhanced version of my *Attack of the Mutant Camels*. The hardware of this system is very special, the CPU quite powerful. There's plenty of raw power, and when combined with the blitter, it all adds up to fast action.

"As a programmer, I've always been concerned with getting the most out of my games. I've done interesting things with *Camel*, but never quite had the sheer power to do what I could see in my head. Now I can really stretch to get what I want on-screen. Plus the design of the console itself is so special—you don't have to compromise on the game mechanics because of being locked into a joystick. Now you can use all the movements in a logical and *real* way that doesn't interfere with what you're trying to do in the game."

Minter plops into a chair—no, not the Konix chair. "Part of the reality of a game is to have it envelop you in its world, and Konix's shape lets the designer build in all the movements necessary, say, for a *Star Wars*-type game. This means pulling back or pushing forward on the yoke to dodge missiles or descend on the en-



*Flying in the Konix Plane*

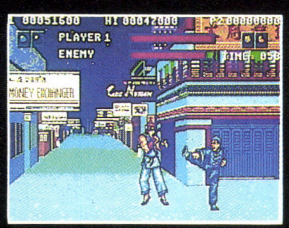


# BAD TO THE BONE

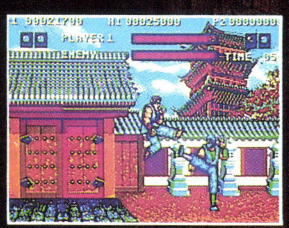
*These are the streets. And there are no rules when you do battle here.*

*STREETFIGHTER is strictly survival of the fittest against 8 of the baddest dudes from around the world. Watch out for flying scissor kicks, lethal Ninja weapons, and other evil tricks. Block their attacks while you counter with jabs and roundhouse kicks. Don't drop your guard cause these guys aren't just b-b-b-b-bad. They're "Bad to the Bone."*

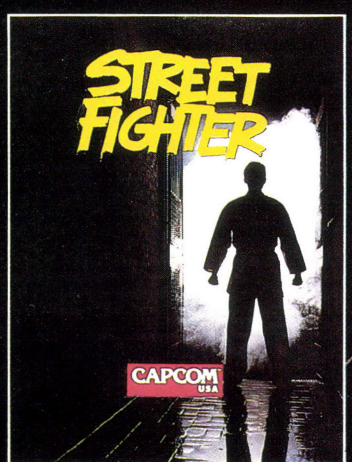
*So see your favorite software retailer or call Capcom U.S.A. 408-727-1665. You don't want to keep these guys waiting!*




***Try a roundhouse kick against an English street tough.***




***Dodge the lethal Ninja weapons of Geki.***

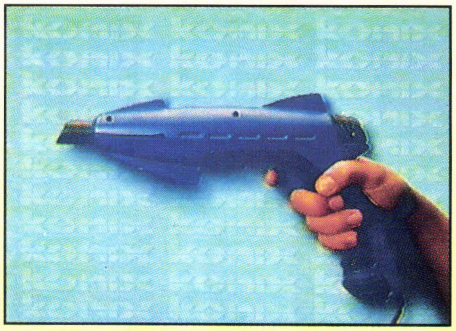



CAPCOM® USA

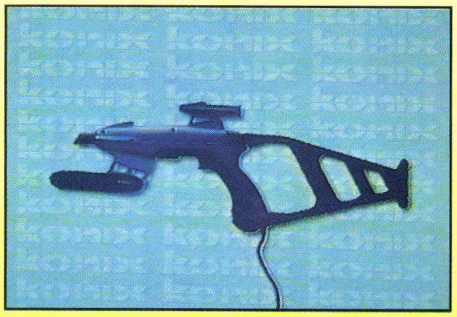
CIRCLE #115 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

emy." Minter is especially pleased as he feels that the Multi-System will let games reach their full potential. "The physical design lets you do excellent things," he affirms.

"No doubt you'd like a few more specifications on game play," inquires Holloway. "Sprite generation is vast and almost unlimited. Put 64 of them on at once if you'd like, the action won't slow down. And size is no barrier. The polygon-draw mode on the screen utilizes some 9,000 pixels per second, with a movement frame rate of 60 frames a second in the slow mode and 180 in the fast."



The Konix Gun with and without rifle stock



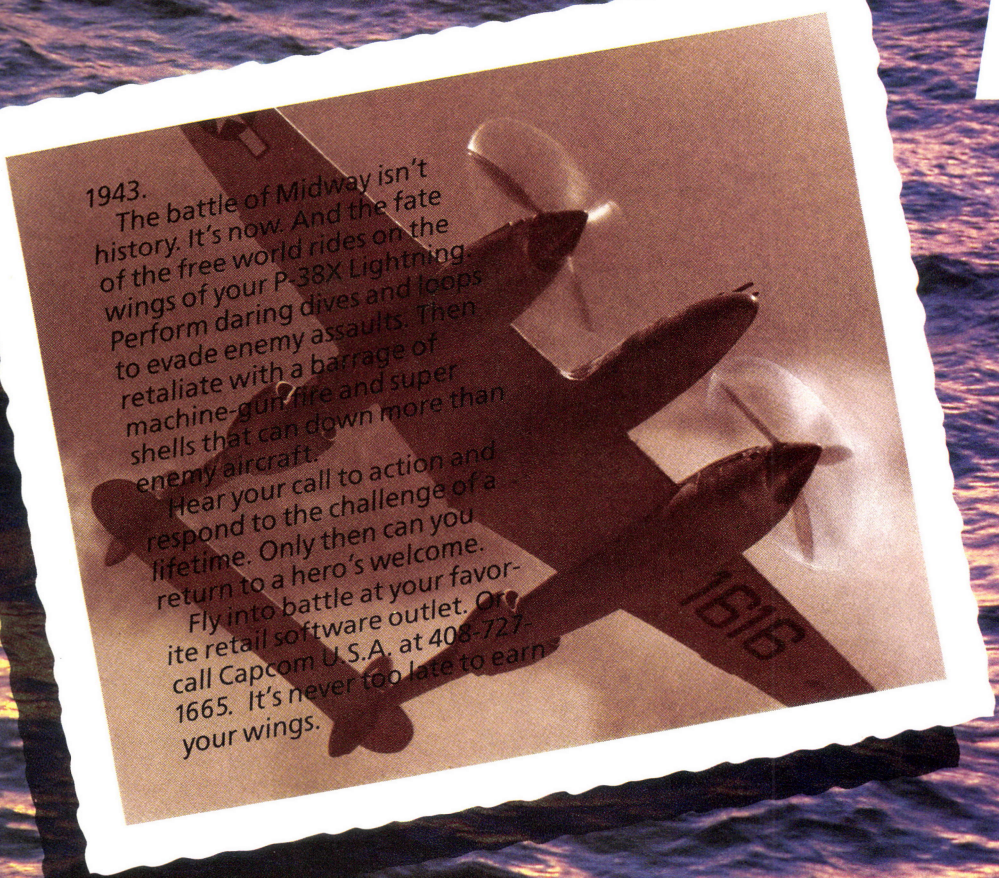
It all adds up to an impressive list of features. Finally, Holloway boots up a sample program and we forget all the talk of blitters, sprites and CPU's as the screen fills with action— fast-moving action. Using the Multi-System is exactly like working one of the coin-ops from the arcades, but obviously better because it's not gulping quarters. If the software can deliver on the promise being made, this is going to be great!

**Product Information:**
Konix Multi-System:
Konix
Unit 35,
Rassau Industrial Estate,
EBBW Vale, Gwent,
Wales, NP3 5SD United Kingdom




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Hear your call to action and respond to the challenge of a lifetime. Only then can you return to a hero's welcome.

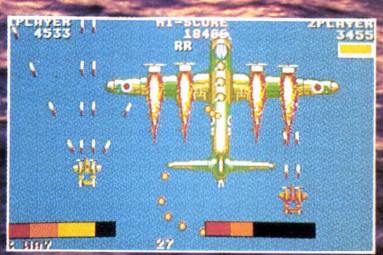
Fly into battle at your favorite retail software outlet. Or call Capcom U.S.A. at 408-727-1665. It's never too late to earn your wings.







*Use all the firepower of your P-38 against the famous enemy squadron.*




*Take down an enemy super bomber. Watch out for those gun turrets!*

CAPCOM® USA

CIRCLE #117 ON READER SERVICE CARD.


Bases Loaded
Nintendo

# Extra Innings.

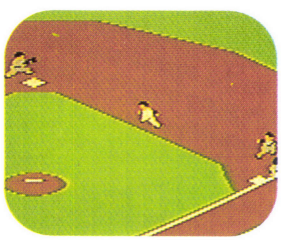
Everything you've heard about it is true. The nerve-wracking tension, the explosive graphics, the awesome action of baseball at its best.

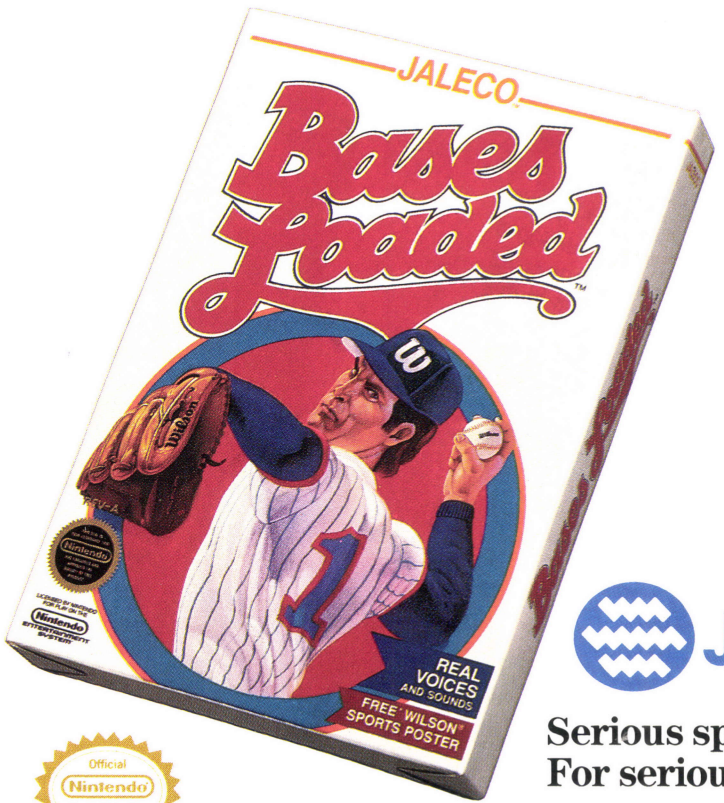
If that's your bag, you've finally met your match. "Bases Loaded™" has arrived!

At your favorite video game store now!








Official Nintendo Seal of Quality

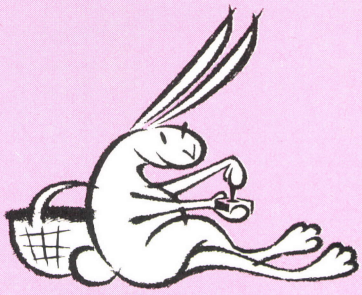
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**For serious players.**

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CIRCLE #118 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

# EASTER EGG HUNT



Tips are graded on a scale of one to five joysticks. The more joysticks that are colored in, the more valuable the hint!

We're digging for new Easter Eggs all the time, and that's where you come in. Simply send the hints and tips you uncover to VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, ATTN: *Easter Egg Hunt*. The author of each new tip we use will receive $10. Write neatly, and be sure to include your name and address!

Here's a key to the abbreviations:

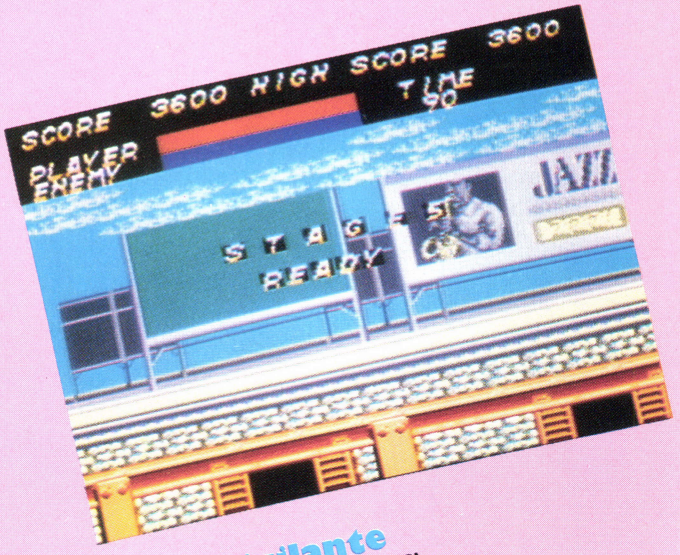
U = Up
D = Down
L = Left
R = Right
A = "A" button
B = "B" button




## Ninja Gaiden

**(Tecmo for the NES)**

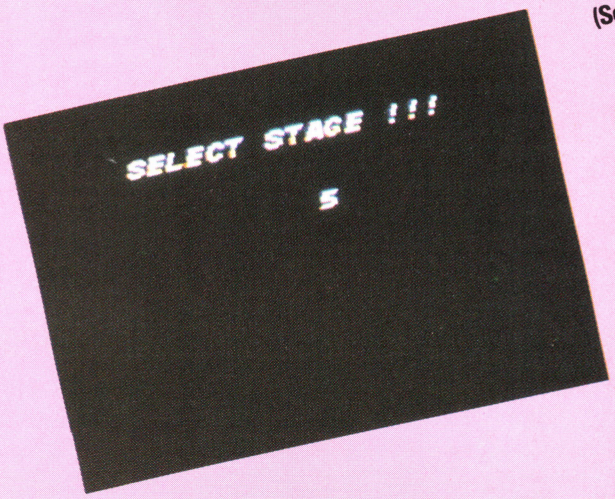
Many games contain a method for the programmers to check out each sound in a game. Bryan Datu of Daly City, California, has given us a way to check the sounds in this exciting martial-arts contest. While holding L on the control pad, simultaneously push A, B, SELECT and START. You can then change the sound counter with up and down pushes on the controller, and A will playback the sound. Thanks, Bryan.




## Vigilante

**(Sega for the SMS)**

There is a level select available for this chop-socky game. From the title screen, hold down U and L on the control pad and hit 1 and 2, all at the same time. Hold them until you see a stage-select screen appear. Moving your directional pad will let you pick what level you want to go to.



# EASTER EGG HUNT



## Commando

**(Capcom for the NES)**

Frequent *Eggs* contributor Peter Siamidis of Montreal, Quebec, Canada, has given a method for uncovering all hidden ladders. From the title screen, use a second controller to push L three times, B twice, A four times, R then START. Another $10 to you, Peter.



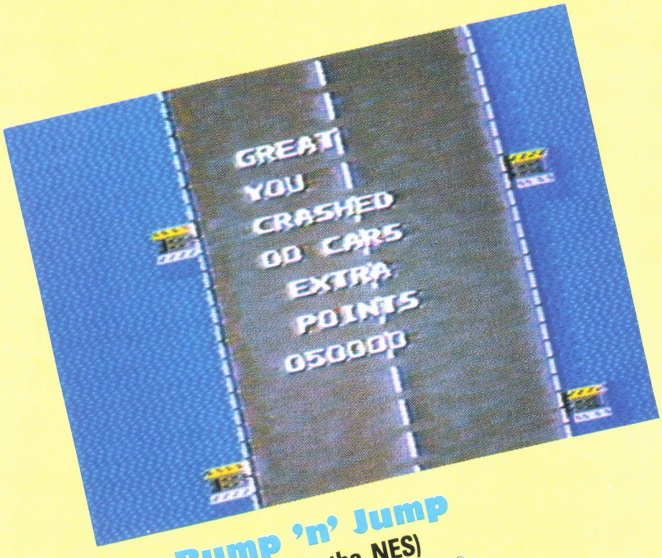




## Kid Niki

**(Data East for the NES)**

El Dorado, Arkansas' Chris Loggins has relayed a bonus room for this scrolling game. On Level 3, jump on the third cloud that goes up and down. Kill the kite and bird, then wait until the cloud goes up to its peak. Press U and jump, and you'll discover a secret room for extra points. Nice one, Chris.

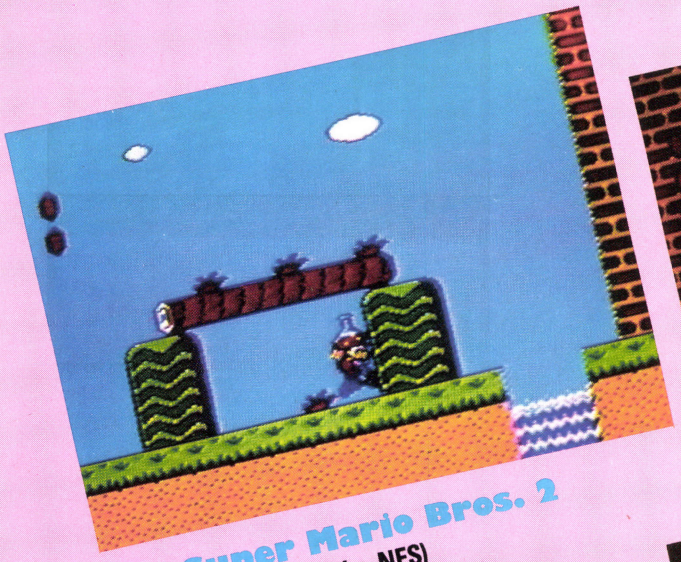


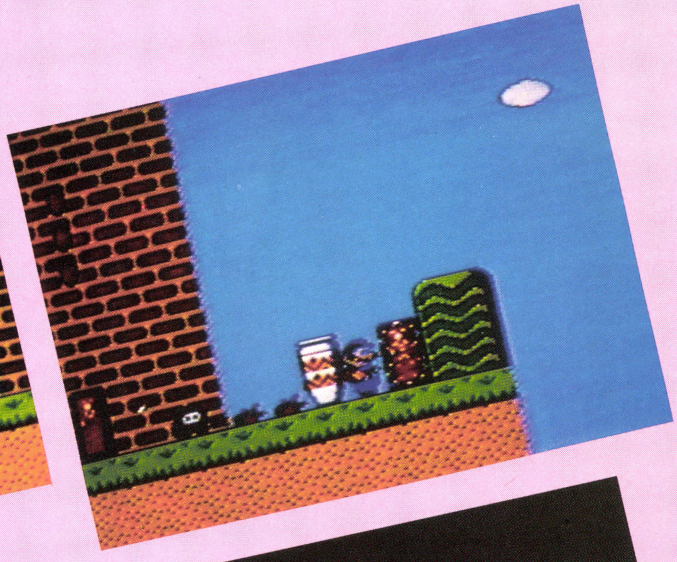

## Bump 'n' Jump

**(Vic Tokai for the NES)**

If you want to score a cool 50,000 points, Reginald Stewart of Cleveland, Ohio, has a surefire way. Though it's hard to do, go through an entire level without crashing any enemy cars. If you do, a special bonus will be awarded. Good discovery, Reginald.

# EASTER EGG HUNT

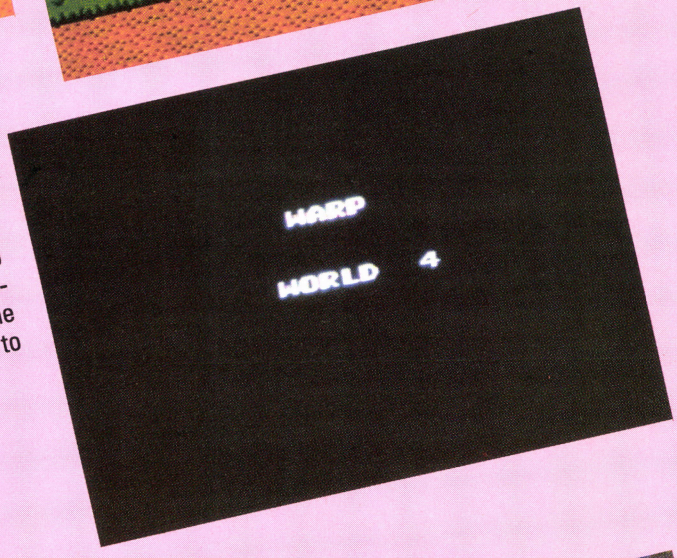


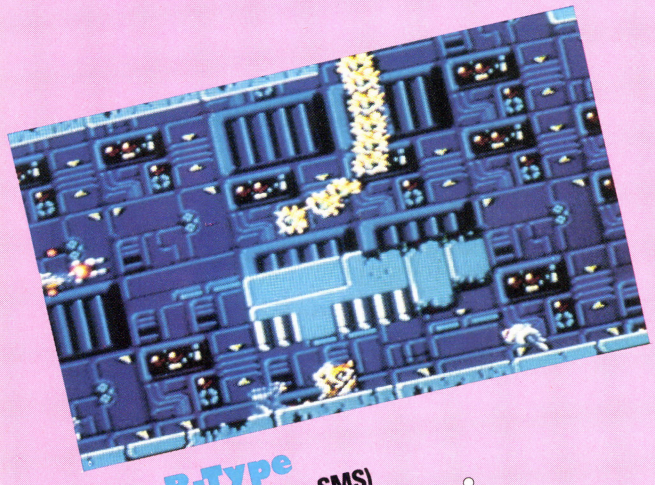


## Super Mario Bros. 2

**(Nintendo for the NES)**

John Simms of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, has informed us of a warp to get straight from World 1-3 to 4-1. Pick up the potion, at the location in the picture above, and carry it to the next vase. If you throw the potion to create a door, go into subspace and enter the vase there, you'll be transported magically to World 4-1. Nice hint, John.

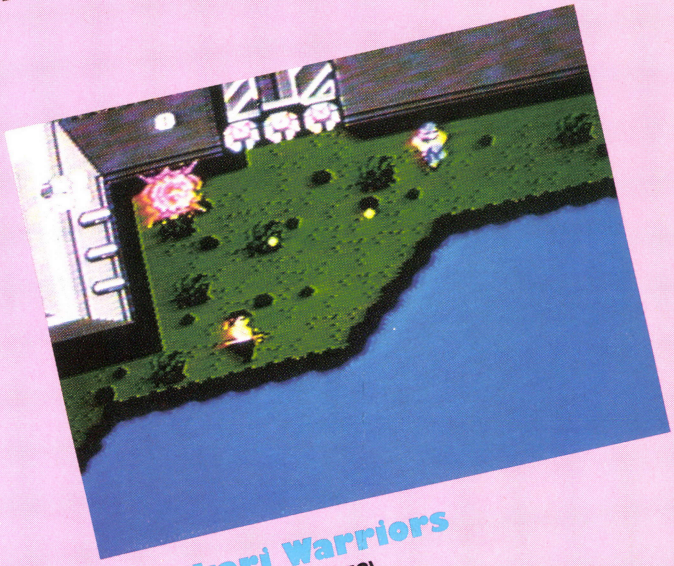


## R-Type

**(Sega for the SMS)**

The programmers of this involved space game have embedded an egg that will let your character become invincible. Using two control pads and the power off, push D and R on the first controller and U and L on the second controller. While holding these down, power up and push the No. 1 button to start the game (you may need a friend to help you with all this button pushing).

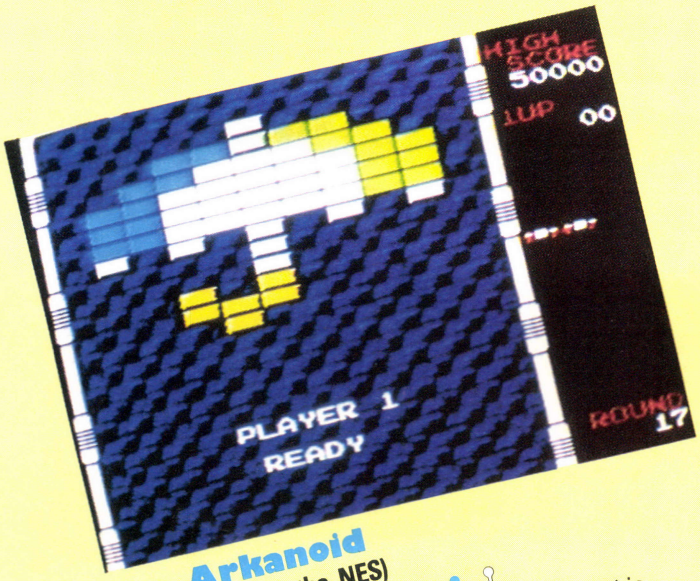


## Ikari Warriors

**(SNK for the NES)**

Jim Wilson of Stafford Springs, Connecticut, tells us that pushing A B B A before the Game Over screen appears will let you continue where you left off. Our readers thank you, Jim.

# EASTER EGG HUNT




## Arkanoid

**(Taito for the NES)**

Though the instruction booklet for this popular NES game tells you how to select up to Level 16, Greg Beaton of St. Catharine's, Ontario, Canada, says you can continue further (with his help, of course). If you hold A, B and START while hitting SELECT five times, you can continue from the last level you were on. Good job, Greg.

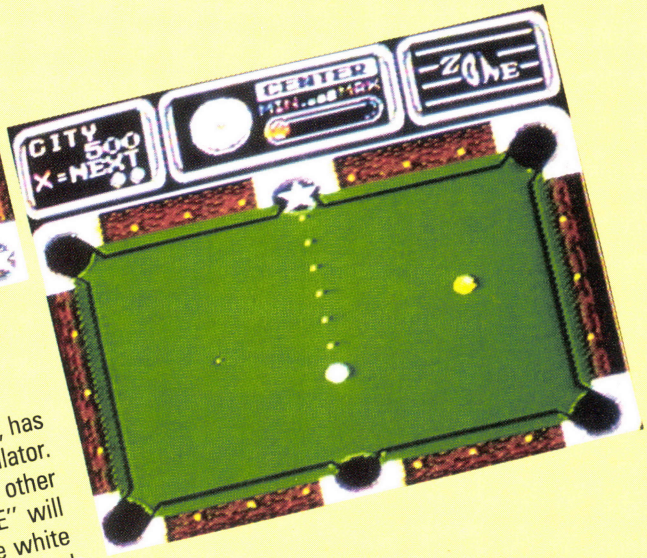



## Bases Loaded

**(Jaleco for the NES)**

Halls, Tennesee's John Sammons has sent us a way to no-hit the computer team. Take a left-handed pitcher and move him to the left side of the mound on every pitch. Then hold D while the pitcher winds up and delivers. The computer won't swing until midway through the fifth inning. At that time, bring in a lefty relief pitcher and follow the same strategy. When you get to the end of the game, you'll have a no-hit shutout! Thanks for the assist, John.




## Side Pocket

**(Data East for the NES)**

David Glomski of Indianapolis, Indiana, has found a bonus for this billiards simulator. When you have the cue ball and one other ball left on the table, the word "ZONE" will appear in the top-right corner. Hit the white ball into the pocket containing the star and the table will turn black with stars appearing at all corners. Hitting the remaining ball into any one of the pockets will give you bonus points or extra balls. That ought to help some shooters, David.

# The VG&CE Directory of Video Game Companies

**by the Editors**

We receive hundreds of calls from gamers who want to get in touch with the companies responsible for their video games and associated products. What follows is a list to help you contact these businesses. Where possible, we've included their game counselor phone number. Most companies don't have a separate line for game counseling, so contact the main number for more information.

Keep in mind that companies frequently change addresses and phone numbers, so this list is subject to error.

---

Absolute Entertainment, 251 Rock Rd., P.O. Box 116, Glen Rock, NY 07452; (201) 652-1227.

Acclaim Entertainment, 189 South St., Oyster Bay, NY 11771; (516) 922-2400.
**Game counseling:** (516) 624-9300.

Activision/Mediagenic, 2885 Bohannon Dr., Menlo Park, CA 94025; (415) 329-0500.
**Game counseling:** (415) 329-7699.

American Sammy, 2421 205th St., Suite D-104, Torrance, CA 90501; (213) 320-7167.

American Technos, 10080 North Wolf Rd., Suite SW3-372, Cupertino, CA 95014; (408) 996-1877.

Asmik Corporation, Wells Fargo Bank Building, 444 South Flower St., Suite 1600, Los Angeles, CA 90071-2975; (213) 627-4783.

Atari Corp., 1196 Borregas Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94088-3427; (408) 745-2000.

Bandai America, 12951 East 16th St., Cerritos, CA 90701; (213) 926-0947.

Beeshu, 101 Wilton Ave., Middlesex, NY 08846; (201) 968-6868.

Bondwell Industrial, 47485 Seabridge Dr., Fremont, CA 94538; (415) 490-4300.

Broderbund Software, 17 Paul Dr., San Rafael, CA 94903; (415) 492-3200.

Capcom USA, 3303 Scott Blvd., Santa Clara, CA 95054; (408) 727-0400.
**Game counseling:** (408) 727-1665, (408) 727-1696, (408) 727-1796.

Color Dreams, 2700 East Imperial Hwy., Bldg. A, Brea, CA 92621; (714) 579-0693.

CSG Imagesoft, 9200 Sunset Blvd., Suite 820, Los Angeles, CA 90069; (213) 858-3777.

Culture Brain USA, 15315 N.E. 90th St., Redmond, WA 98052; (206) 882-2339.

Curtis Manufacturing, 30 Fitzgerald Dr., Jaffrey, NH 03452; (603) 532-4123, (800) 548-4900.

Data East USA, 1850 Little Orchard St., San Jose, CA 95125; (408) 286-7080.
**Game counseling:** (408) 286-7074.

FCI, 150 East 52nd St., 34th Floor, New York, NY 10022; (212) 753-8100;
**Game counseling:** (312) 968-0425.

Gametek, 2999 N.E. 191st St., Suite 800, N. Miami Beach, FL 33180; (305) 935-3995.

HAL America, 7873 S.W. Cirrus Dr., 25-F, Beaverton, OR 97005; (503) 644-4117.

Happ Controls, 106 Garlisch Dr., Elk Grove, IL 60007; (312) 593-6130.

Hi-Tech Expressions, 584 Broadway, Suite 509, New York, NY 10012; (212) 941-1224.
**Game counseling:** (212) 941-9703, (212) 941-9704.

Hot-B USA, 1255 Post St., Suite 1005, San Francisco, CA 94109; (415) 567-9501.

Hudson Soft USA, 601 California St., Suite 2004, San Francisco, CA 94108; (415) 391-1494.
**Game counseling:** (415) 495-4468.

Irem Corporation USA, 7310 Center Ave., Huntington Beach, CA 92647; (714) 895-3483.

Jaleco USA, 5617 West Howard St., Niles, IL 60648; (312) 647-7077.

Koei Corporation, One Bay Plaza, Suite 540, 1350 Bayshore Hwy., Burlingame, CA 94010; (415) 348-0200.
**Game counseling:** (415) 348-0500.

Konami, 900 Deerfield Parkway, Buffalo Grove, IL 60089; (312) 215-5100.
**Game counseling:** (312) 215-5111.

LJN Toys, 1107 Broadway, New York, NY 10010; (212) 243-6565.

Matchbox Toys (USA), 141 West Commercial Ave., Moonachie, NJ 07074; (201) 935-2600.

Mattel, 5150 Rosecrans Ave., Hawthorne, CA 90250; (213) 978-5150.

Milton Bradley, 443 Shaker Rd., East Longmeadow, MA 01028; (413) 525-6411.
**Game counseling:** (413) 525-3545.

Mindscape, 3444 Dundee Rd., Northbrook, IL 60062; (312) 480-7667.
**Game counseling:** (312) 480-8715.

NEC Home Electronics (USA), 1255 Michael Dr., Wood Dale, IL 60191; (312) 860-9500.

Nexoft Corporation, 3868 Carson St., Suite 211, Torrance, CA 90503; (213) 540-4778.

Nintendo of America, 4820 150th Ave. N.E., Redmond, WA 98052; (206) 882-2040.
**Game counseling:** (206) 885-7529.

NTVIC, 50 Rockefeller Plaza, Suite 940, New York, NY 10020; (212) 489-9390.

Romstar, 22857 Lockness Ave., Torrance, CA 90501; (213) 539-2744.
**Game counseling:** (213) 539-5289.

Sega of America, 573 Forbes Blvd., South San Francisco, CA 94080; (800) USA-SEGA.

Seika Corporation, 20000 Mariner Ave., Suite 100, Torrance, CA 90503; (213) 373-0404.
**Game counseling:** (800) 462-5040.

Seta USA, 22301 South Western Ave., Suite 107, Torrance, CA 90501; (213) 328-7084.

SNK Corporation of America, 246 Sobrante Way, Sunnyvale, CA 94086; (408) 736-8844.
**Game counseling:** (800) PLAY-SNK.

Sofel, 1333 Ocean Ave., Suite B, Santa Monica, CA 90401; (213) 458-3916.

Square Soft, Westpark G-1, 8347 154th Ave. N.E., Redmond, WA 98052; (206) 861-0101.

Suncom, 6400 West Grosspoint Rd., Niles, IL 60648; (312) 459-8000.

Sunsoft, 925 A.E.C. Dr., Wood Dale, IL 60191; (312) 350-8800.

Taito Software, 267 West Esplanade, Suite 206, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7M 1A5; (604) 984-3344.

Taxan USA, 161 Nortech Parkway, San Jose, CA 95134; (408) 946-9500.
**Game counseling:** (408) 946-3400 x253.

Tecmo, Victoria Business Park, 18005 South Adria Maru Lane, Carson, CA 90746; (213) 329-5880, (800) 338-0336.

Tengen, 1623 Buckeye Dr., Milpitas, CA 95035; (408) 435-2650.
**Game counseling:** (408) 473-9495.

Toho, 2049 Century Park East, Suite 490, Los Angeles, CA 90067; (213) 277-1081.

Tradewest, P.O. Box 1796, 2400 South Hwy. 75, Corsicana, TX 75110; (214) 874-2683.

Ultra Software, 900 Deerfield Parkway, Buffalo Grove, IL 60089; (312) 215-5100.
**Game counseling:** (312) 215-5111.

Vic Tokai, 22904 Lockness Ave., Torrance, CA 90501; (213) 326-8880.

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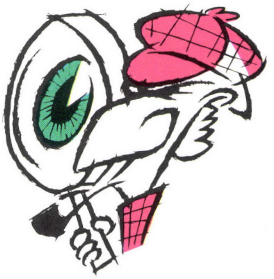

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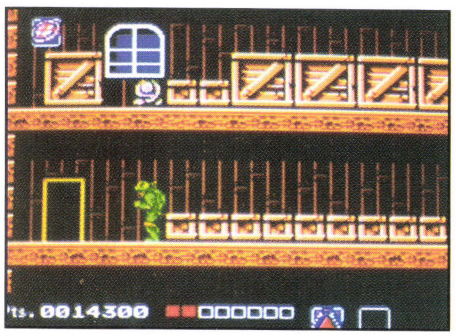
# Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

### Ultra

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($43.95)

Hot from the comics come Leonardo, Raphael, Michaelangelo and Donatello, better known as the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. This time around, their good friend, April, has been abducted by Shredder, described as ". . . a Slice-O-Matic crum, a villain more vicious than an army of mind-altered Bruce Lees."

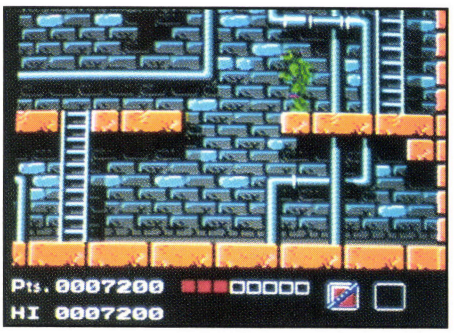
After rescuing April, the Turtles must continue on their original mission, battling their way through to the Technodrome, where they must emerge victorious with Shredder's life transformer gun in their hands. . . uh. . . paws. . . uh. . . feet.




**In the long-anticipated video game from Ultra, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, you must do all you can to rescue your captured comrade, April.**

That's right, folks. The long-awaited *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* video game has arrived. This is your chance to guide these comic-book heroes through five tough levels of karate action. You can choose to play any one of the four Turtles (you can switch between them during play), each of which has his own good and bad points. Raphael's weapon, the sai, is fast but has a short range; Michaelangelo's nunchukus work well with smaller enemies; Donatello is a marvelous fighter but is the slowest of the Turtles; and Leonardo balances attack power with good mobility, making him the most well-rounded of the Turtles.

**Slices of pizza, the superheroes' favorite meal, may be found in various places around the grounds and used to boost your power bar.**




Pizza, the Turtles's main source of nourishment (did I hear somebody's stomach growl?), can be found throughout New York. Sometimes only a single slice is available, sometimes an entire pizza. Each slice of pizza consumed restores a portion of a Turtle's life. In this way, you can bring back into battle any Turtles that have become too weak to fight. However, care must be taken not to let a Turtle die. Once his life meter reaches zero, all the pizza in Sicily will do him no good.

Many other items that will help the Turtles along can also be found, including anti-Foot Clan missiles, ropes, boomerangs and shuriken. If you're very lucky, you'll be awarded temporary invincibility, giving you a chance to really wreak some havoc on Shredder and his buddies.

The scenes you must battle through come in a variety of types. Initially you begin on the streets of New York, shown in an overhead view. Open manholes provide access to the city's sewers wherein you will find myriad enemies. The goal here is to find the quickest route to April and defeat her captor. In Scene 2, you leap into the Hudson River, where you must swim past deadly seaweed and electric force fields in order to deactivate eight bombs before the timer runs out. Other scenes include Wall Street, JFK International Airport, Shredder's base and, of course, the Technodrome.

During your mission you'll come across plenty of Shredder's partners in crime: Fire Freak, Roof Leaper, Big Mouser, Mecaturtle, Bebop and Rocksteady. Thanks to the abundance of these enemies, the action in *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* is fast and furious. You'll rarely get a moment's rest as you battle your way toward the life

transformer gun and your final showdown with Shredder.

The graphics are crisp and well detailed and provide a good variety of scenes. The game control is smooth and responsive, with only an occasional sluggishness when there are many enemies on the screen at the same time (a problem that seems to crop up in a good many games for the NES).

*Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*'s many diverse locales will provide hours of entertaining arcade action. From the streets of New York to the sewers below the city to the barricades of Wall Street to the bomb-ridden airfield, you'll find plenty to challenge you and enough variety to keep the game fresh for a long time.

Whether or not you're a fan of these comic sensations, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* belongs in your NES game collection. It's a playable contest that'll keep you enthralled for many an evening.

Oh, by the way, would you please pass the pizza?

**—Clayton Walnum**

**Ultra, 900 Deerfield Parkway, Wood Dale, IL 60191; (312) 215-5100.**

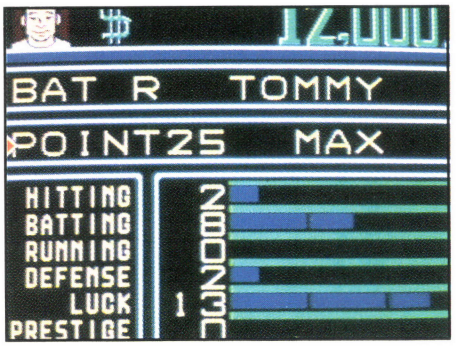
# Baseball Stars

## SNK

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($30)

*Baseball Stars* is a complex sports simulation in which you build and manage teams in a league. It sports excellent graphics and a soundtrack that will make you appreciate the volume knob on your TV set.

The opening screen on *Baseball Stars* lets you choose your options. These are varied, and it's this combination of options that gives the game its depth. The first option is "League Play," which allows you to play in a pre-defined league, see the league's standings or



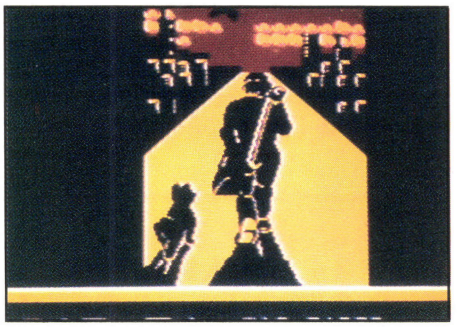

Not only does SNK's *Baseball Stars* have a quality baseball simulator, but it also lets you tailor players' abilities to your liking.

set up a new league. If you choose to start from scratch, you can select the number of teams and how many games each team will play—even the logo that the club will use.

The cartridge comes with some teams built-in, and there is an option to create or remove teams. Building a team is a simple matter, because rather than picking players, you choose the team's strong point—i.e., consistent hitters, fast runners, a balanced squad, etc. Once you have done this, the NES fills in the statistics. These are then added to the roster and can be placed in a newly created league. Unfortunately, they cannot be added to a league already in progress. The *Baseball Stars* cartridge sports a battery backup, so the league and team standings are saved from game to game.

You can also trade players from your created teams; the players on the built-in teams are not available. If the players traded have significant differences in their statistics, the stronger player's statistics will be adjusted down to more closely match the weaker player's, so you have to watch your deals.

As the manager of your own baseball team, you can arrange your players in any manner you choose and compete in league action.



A "view team" option is available for checking on the stats of each player on a team, which include hitting, batting, running, defense (catching), luck and prestige (not sure about this one). A player has a maximum number of "potential" points which can be split between these categories, as well as a ceiling of "actual" points. The player's actual points will approach the potential maximum as he (or she, as you can also have female players) continues to play. For example, a rookie will have only a few actual points with a high potential max, while the actual points and max points for a star will be very close together. If players are doing poorly you can fire them, enabling you to buy other players, provided you have amassed enough money playing games in league play.

Once you have set things up the way you want them, you get to play baseball, and *Baseball Stars* is quite good. Versatility is key as there are two options for playing games. The first is league competition, where the teams you have named will play each other. The other version is "vs. play," where any two teams you have set up in your roster can compete. In league play, if two teams are computer controlled, you can elect to have the game decided instantly or watch the computer play. The latter is a lengthy affair, so you probably won't want to choose this option often.

Just the same, *Baseball Stars* is saddled with some of the limitations that other NES baseball simulations have. While pitching and batting is fairly straightforward, controlling the fielding is not for the easily frustrated. Once the ball is hit, it is very difficult to catch, even with the help of a small shadow. One problem is that you can't see the fielder who is running for the ball until the last second. If the ball does hit the ground, it's hard to judge where the player is in relation to the ball because you can see the ball *through* the player.

*Baseball Stars* is best played against another person, because the NES is an awesome opponent that *never* makes mistakes. Scores of 16-1 aren't uncommon—after two innings! Vs. play is pretty much the same as league play, with options for one-player, two-player or computer play. The advantage here is that any two teams and any two people can play for the fun of it, without upsetting league play.

The graphics of *Baseball Stars* are simply excellent. The colorful players are realistically animated, and depth and distance are accurately dealt with. The view is generally from above and behind home plate with the entire infield in view. The field scrolls as smoothly as necessary to show the ball's trajectory.

On the negative side, the soundtrack is a bouncy baseball tune that cannot be shut off. It's enough to drive you crazy, as the whole song is only about ten bars which repeat over and over! The manu-

al doesn't tell you how to turn it off, but it also doesn't say anything at all about the actual playing of the game!

Overall, *Baseball Stars* is one of the better b-ball simulations on the NES, as it combines all aspects of controlling a team in addition to the normal play skills. If you like baseball simulations, you should check this one out.

**—David Plotkin**

**SNK, 246 Sobrante Way,
Sunnyvale, CA 94086; (408) 736-8844.**

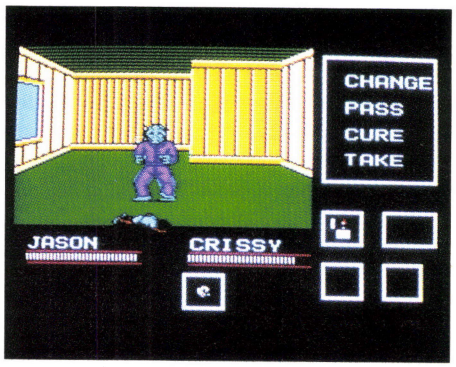
# Friday the 13th

## LJN

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($39.99)

Don't go in there!" you shout to the screen. But, what do you know, the teenage, no-name actor does and gets him or herself lovingly axed or diced up with a machete by none other than the star of the movie himself—*Jason*!

Last summer, the hockey-goalie-masked slasher "took Manhattan" in his eighth movie. And what better way to commemorate the everlasting timeliness of these quality films than with a Nintendo game? Though *Friday the 13th* (the video game) isn't set in the Big Apple, it does take place at every kid's favorite camp resort—




LJN's *Friday the 13th* takes the chilling exploits of the evil Jason and locks them in an NES cartridge.

Crystal Lake! The place where all the mirth and mayhem originated. As the instruction manual puts it: "It's a pretty typical summer. . . . You and your six Camp Counselor friends are watching over the kids. . . . The days are bright and sunny. . . . The nights are cool and clear. . . .

". . . And Jason is on the rampage."

Couldn't have said it better myself.

Yes, it's up to *you* to save the kids and destroy Jason. (Sorry, folks, you can't be Jason in this game.) In the movies, there are always plenty of naive teenagers to keep Jason busy. In the game, you have to play the role of *six* camp counselors—switching from one to another—while protecting fifteen children. Talk about a tough job. The counselors (three male, three female) look in every way like the boneheaded teens from the films.

The game starts out with a map of the entire layout of Crystal Lake. Here, you'll find the locations of small and large cabins, trails, wooded areas, Jason's cave hideout and, of course, the infamous Crystal Lake itself. This screen is also where you select the camp counselor you intend to play—each stationed at his or her own cabin. By strategically placing Idiot Teen 1 in one area of the campground and Idiot Teen 2, 3 and so on in other separate places, you can cover as much of the campground as possible (and get to the kids quickly when Jason finds them—more on this later).

It's not apparent or mentioned in the instruction manual, but each of the six counselors is different from one another in areas of running speed, endurance and offensive power. For example, counselors Laura and George are the fastest runners and, thus, can move from one area of the camp to another in less time. On the other hand, Mark, though a slowpoke, is better able to withstand Jason's usually fatal attacks.

Once you've selected the counselor you want to be, the game screen switches over to a side view of your character standing in front of the cabin he or she was just in. Moving the controller right or left makes your video teenager walk along the trail in the appropriate direction. To stop you, zombies rise out of the trail path

Slip into the shoes of one of the six camp counselors at Crystal Lake, and try your best to save the children from Jason's evil grip.




and attack. These "dead heads" can be easily done in by throwing rocks; or avoid them entirely by leaping over them. Other creeps out to drain your life energy include wolves and crows.

Entering the cave or wooded areas can be hazardous if you don't know your way around. These places are confusing mazes, but finding your way through them is necessary to defeat Jason. In the cave, an arsenal of weapons is hidden, which you must retrieve and use on Jason. But these items are guarded by bats and even the head of Jason's dead mom. Like real-life mothers, being cross with her can spell out your own doom.

And then there's Jason himself—what an annoying pest he can be. An alarm sounds and an indicator flashes to warn you when the happy hacker is attacking one of your counselor pals or the children hidden away at the shore of Crystal Lake. When this happens, better stop whatever you're doing and come to their rescue. If you don't, Jason will "defeat" them in no time (as the instruction manual prefers to ambiguously describe his executions).

Those who've watched the movies and claimed that they (if *they* were the victims on screen) would've never done "this or that" but "something else instead," when yet another teen got brutally eliminated by Jason, now have their chance to prove themselves on the Nintendo, courtesy of LJN. Unless Jason takes a vacation and passes up his ninth movie, be warned, potential idiot teenagers: Ol' Hockey Mask is just as brutal in his first outing on the game screen.

**—Christie Hewlett**

**LJN Toys, Ltd., 1107 Broadway,
New York, NY 10010; (212) 243-6565.**

# Mean Streets

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# Taboo

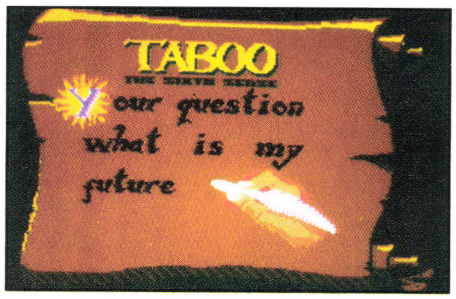
## Tradewest

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($39.95)

Many people would like to know what the future holds. They visit psychics or try to divine the unknown through tea leaves, palm reading, astrology and various oracles. One of the ancient methods of divination was a system of cards created in the Middle Ages, when a lot of esoteric knowledge was considered dangerous and heretical. In order to preserve the mystical symbols, this set of cards was created. They appeared to be ornate but otherwise ordinary cards to the uninitiated. To those in the know, however, they were full of symbolism.

People still use tarot cards to find out about the future. And now you can enjoy a version of this divination on the NES with *Taboo*.

*Taboo* uses a set of tarot cards which are laid out in a "spread," an arrangement in which each card has a specific meaning to your situation. For instance, one card may represent your major obstacles, another may represent your hopes and dreams, and so forth. The cards are turned faceup, one at a time, and the information they contain is interpreted by the program.




Tradewest's *Taboo* plays fortune-teller to try and divine your future through tarot card reading.

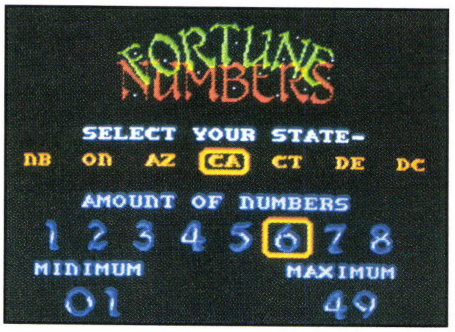
Although *Taboo* is amusing, it is like many other general oracles. Sometimes it seems to be right on; other times it hits wide of the mark. The interpretations are also somewhat conservative and lend themselves to generalities. Sometimes you really have to stretch your mind to make them seem sensible at all. I've seen tarot readings by good readers, and their interpretations can and will vary depending on the circumstances and the person whose fortune is being divined. You may not always understand human readings, either, but they do speak directly to you and your situation. *Taboo* lacks that kind of versatility.

To play *Taboo*, you enter your name, date of birth, sex and a question, using the controller to select appropriate letters and numbers. Unfortunately, there is no option to ask another question for the same person, so you have to enter all the information for each question you want to ask. After you read your interpretations, *Taboo* asks what state you live in (strangely, the program left out Alaska and Hawaii from the list of states) and offers you some lucky numbers. These are *your* numbers which should help you rush out and win your local lottery, though, again, I wouldn't take them too seriously.

One of *Taboo*'s tricks to help you understand the meaning of each card is that it plays a short musical theme. If the interpretation is good, the theme is uplifting. If the news is not so good, the theme is more dirgelike. Some people may like the musical clues, but I would have liked to turn them off.

I like *Taboo*. It is amusing and sometimes intriguing, but it is really just a toy. I wouldn't want anyone to take it too seriously. Neither, for that matter, does Tradewest. They even put a disclaimer on the package recommending the product for people over the age of 13. And, as much as I found the program amusing, I'm not sure I would recommend that people spend their money on it for the limited amusement it provides. After all, how many times do you want to consult an oracle that you aren't supposed to take seriously in the first place?

There's even a section in *Taboo* that offers you a personal set of lucky numbers, specifically designed for your state's lottery game.




Anyway, there are all kinds of people in the world, and maybe some people would find this great fun. It does make a fairly amusing party game. You can ask it a question as a group, and then see what it comes up with. It might surprise you. For instance, I asked it about the country of China during a recent student uprising and its assessment of the situation was uncannily accurate.

*Taboo* may not contain all the knowledge of the past, present and future as it claims, but it does offer some light amusement. Should you go out and buy it? Maybe you should ask *Taboo*.

**—Rusel DeMaria**

**Tradewest, P.O. Box 1796, 2400 S. Highway 75, Corsicana, TX 75110; (214) 874-2683.**

# Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

## Bandai

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($39.99)

Now here's a game I can personally relate to: It's about a man with a split personality. We all know what it's like to be under pressure. And sometimes we show a different side of ourselves—more "evil," if you will—in these conditions. This was what Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson delved into in one of his most famous literary works, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, written and published over 100 years ago. Now, a century later, this classic bestseller has been translated into an NES game by Bandai.

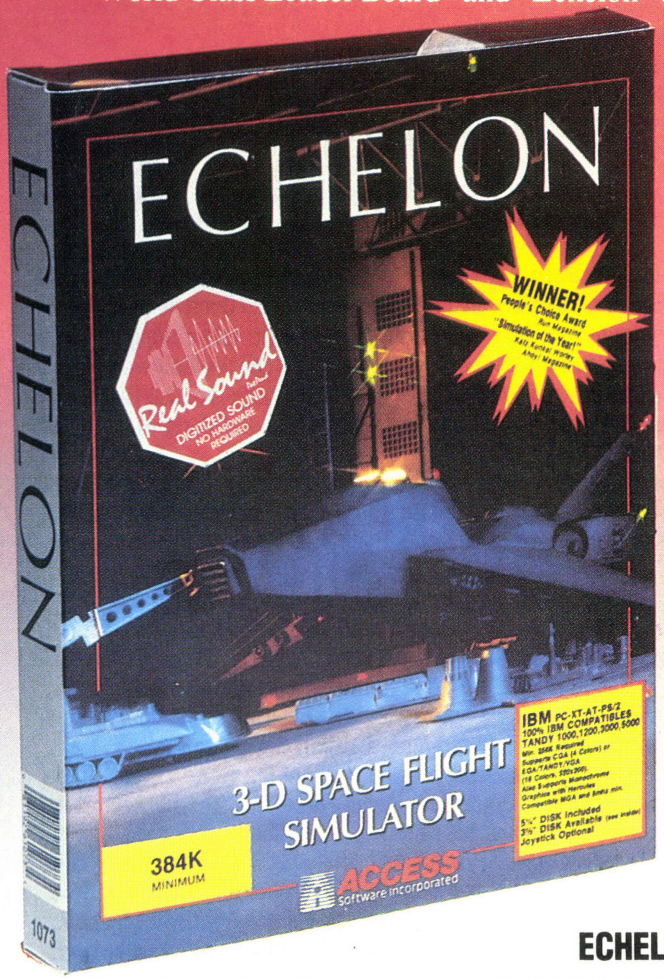
The mild mannered Dr. Jekyll has created a potion which separates man's two opposing personalities: good and evil. Using the potion on himself, the doctor transforms into the beast known as Mr. Hyde and soon finds himself unable to control his sudden "mood swings."

What's worse is that today is the day Dr. Jekyll must get to the church on time to marry his fiancee, Miss Millicent. He starts out in front of his house and walks to the right of the scrolling screen.

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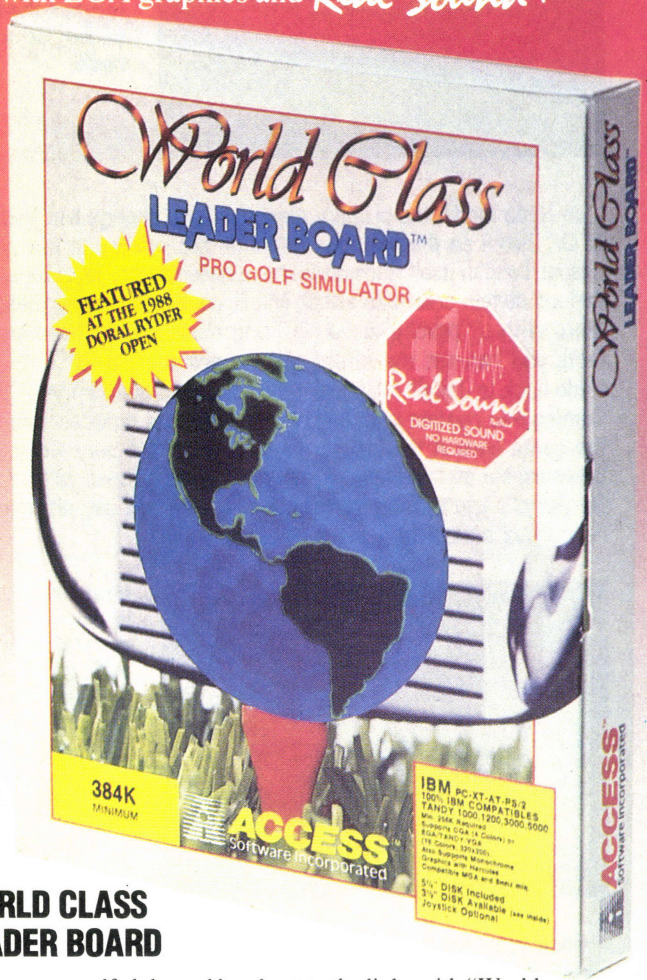
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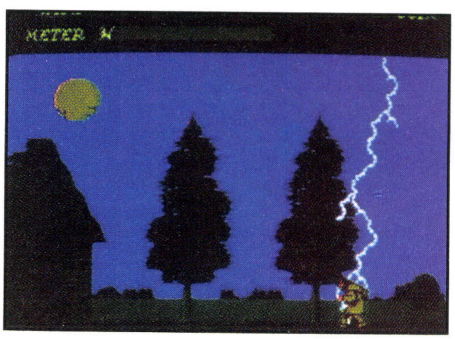
Your job is to slow him down or speed him up in order to avoid accidents and other obstacles in his way.

But the world isn't being too kind to him this morning. It seems that all of London is out to stress out Dr. Jekyll. A boy speeds by shooting rocks at him with a slingshot, a crazy hunter fires his rifle randomly at will, a digger shovels dirt into his face, two beautiful women try to seduce him, a cat and dog attack him, a couple of men throw bombs at him and—to top it all off—there's a fat lady who sings awfully. Coming into conflict with any of these things will push Dr. Jekyll's stress meter toward "H." When this gauge goes all the way to "H," the doctor collapses to the ground and transforms into Mr. Hyde.




You never know what kind of creature you'll run into in Bandai's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, a game that follows the theme of the Stevenson book.

In Hyde mode, the primary objective is to change Mr. Hyde back to Dr. Jekyll so that you can continue his journey to the wedding chapel. London itself transforms into a hallucinatory landscape, where various demon creatures attack Mr. Hyde. By destroying these monsters with a "psycho-wave" (a firing mode with a boomerang effect), you can set the stress meter back toward "J" and change Hyde back to Jekyll. Watch out for your separate life meter though. Coming into contact with any of these demons reduces it and, thus, the game ends if this gauge goes down all the way. Coins sometimes appear after a creature is shot. Collecting these will help make Dr. Jekyll's trip to the altar easier, since he can pay off potentially dangerous people to leave him alone.




If you aren't careful in keeping stress out of Jekyll's life as he heads toward his wedding, he'll turn into the ornery Mr. Hyde.

Once you change Hyde back to Dr. Jekyll, he continues to stroll merrily along to church, and you must again make sure he avoids coming across stressful situations. He's an extremely sensitive man, you'll soon find out, and must be protectively sheltered.

So that's the object of this video game; to walk Dr. Jekyll to church. Granted, this doesn't sound too terribly exciting (and most of the time it isn't), but blasting away the monsters while you're Mr. Hyde makes up for it. However, you're supposed to *avoid* being Mr. Hyde, which sort of takes the fun, well, out of the fun. Remember, the idea here is to get to church on time so that Dr. Jekyll can get married—*not* to transform into Hyde and go firing away at the demons in la-la land.

This one's a toss-up. *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*'s appeal has a certain kind of duality not unlike the Jekyll/Hyde character himself. A good number of people will like this game for its unconventional concept and unique play. But an equal number might feel that the idea of a video game where the object is to walk a stressed-out man to church is ridiculously absurd. You'll either love this one or hate it. Overall, though, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, like its premise, is basically just a walk in the park.

**—Howard H. Wen**

**Bandai America, Inc., 12951 East 166th St., Cerritos, CA 90701; (213) 926-0947.**

# The Lord of the Sword

## Sega

For the Sega Master System ($47.95)

Trouble is brewing in Baljinya. The king and his family have been murdered, and, as was their plan, the evil creatures who committed the deed are now free to bring their demon lord, Ra Goan, back from the dead and place him on the throne. The Elders of Baljinya have refused to accept Ra Goan as their leader and have begun their search for a hero who can complete three dangerous tasks: find the Tree of Marill, defeat the Goblin of Balala Valley and destroy the Statue of Evil. The Elders promise that whosoever can pass these tests will be proclaimed the rightful king of Baljinya.

You, as Landau, decide to accept the challenge. Not only will you attempt to complete the Elders' three tasks, but you will also, during your travels, clear the countryside of Ra Goan's foul minions. After all, how else can you become king? Armed with blade and bow, you set off to face whatever fate lies in wait for you.

And so begins Sega's new adventure game *The Lord of the Sword*, a stripped-down version of Nintendo's *Zelda II: The Adventure of Link*. In *The Lord of the Sword* you will travel across the highways and through the forests and swamps of Baljinya, stopping in towns to gain information and strength, battling the creatures that stand in your path. The roads you'll travel connect the game's fifteen main locations, including Cram Bog, Namo Forest, Mt. Ozgul, Varlin Castle, Ulmo Forest, Falas, Mt. Morgos, Elder Castle and many towns.

The kingdom of Baljinya is small, and you would think this would make for a short game; but in order to complete the quest, you must discover the proper order in which to visit the various locations. Talkative people in the towns will give you clues as to what to do next, but much experimentation will be necessary to gain needed knowledge. Still, the greater portion of your playing time will be spent learning the best way to defeat the various enemies that attack you en route to your destinations.

The background graphics are not up to Sega's usual standards, but the creatures come in interesting and well-rendered forms. Huge flying eyeballs, animated skeletons, winged demons, giant lizards and other creatures that almost defy description populate Baljinya's landscape and are this game's main attraction. Most of the creatures are fairly easy to defeat, the challenge comes from the sheer numbers in which they attack. Although you can continue up to

*(continued on page 54)*

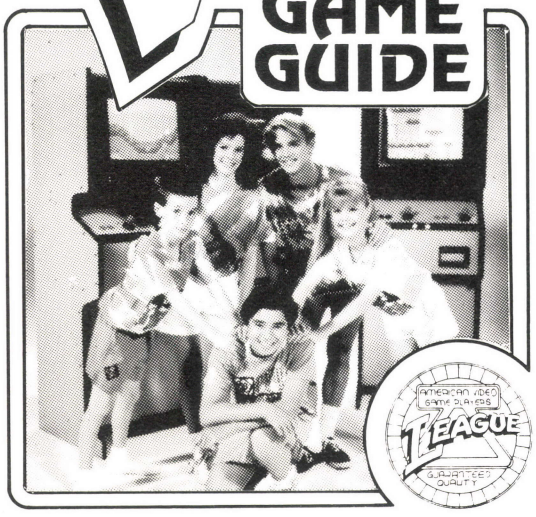
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(continued from page 50)

ten times, getting to the end of this contest is sure to be a challenge for even the most veteran joystick jockey.

Unfortunately, *The Lord of the Sword* provides no password save feature, which means that each time you play, you'll have to plod your way through battles already completed. It seems that video games these days come in two types: those set in a huge world with a password continue feature, and those set in small worlds, the levels of which must be constantly replayed. *The Lord of the Sword* fits in the latter category.




Demon emperor Ra Goan's followers have killed Baljinya's royal family. Are you talented enough to complete the tasks necessary to save the kingdom?

The game control in *The Lord of the Sword* is extremely clumsy. The controller's 1 and 2 buttons are used for the bow and sword, respectively, forcing the jump function to be assigned to the control pad's up arrow. Because most games assign jumping to one of the buttons, players will find it takes time to adjust.

Worse is the sluggishness with which the controls react, particularly when you're in battle. Signals sent from the controller are often ignored in favor of keeping the on-screen animation lively. Nothing is more frustrating than being unable to immediately turn and face an enemy. Jumping is equally as fussy. After some practice, however, you get used to the controls and learn to compensate for the sluggishness.

Clumsy controls aside, if you're looking for a simple but decent hack-and-slash game, you'll probably enjoy *The Lord of the Sword*. Due to its lack of depth, it's not a game that'll hook you for weeks at a time, but it does have a certain charm. However, if you want an epic like *Phantasy Star*, you better look elsewhere. There's little adventure here.

**—Clayton Walnum**

**Sega of America, 573 Forbes Boulevard, South San Francisco, CA 94080; (800) USA-SEGA.**

# Ninja Gaiden

## Tecmo

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($39.99)

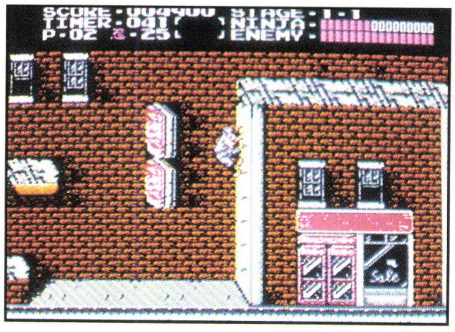
In the earlier years of the NES, martial-arts games seemed to be the staple. Nowadays, that's not entirely so, but this hasn't stopped Tecmo from releasing *Ninja Gaiden*. Their newest entry into the martial-arts video-game genre has, of course, elements that can be found in many previous titles. However, with the twists and gimmicks added, *Ninja Gaiden* is like a good movie with a plot similar to other films—it successfully retells a familiar story as if it were brand-new.

Let's be honest. Like the games themselves, reviews for martial-arts video games tend to read pretty much alike. So, with that thought in mind, here's a painless breakdown of *Ninja Gaiden* to spare you the needless details:

You are Ryu, a super-cool ninja dude. Your father (a ninja, too, but strangely named "Ken") was killed during a contest at a moonlit field by—you got it—an unknown ninja adversary. Upon your father's defeat, you are now the head of the Hayabusa clan and must take the dragon sword, a precious heirloom that's been in your family for generations, to America. Why are you doing this? Heck, you don't know, but what you *do* know is that lots of danger and excitement will be waiting for you in the U.S. of A. During the course of your adventure, you will learn the reasons behind your father's death and what you're supposed to do with the dragon sword—oh, and what all of this has to do with the world coming to an end as it is engulfed by this real nasty evil force. Yeah, pretty much the stuff you'll find in your standard ninja video game.

*Ninja Gaiden* is presented in a side-view, action-adventure format like Konami's *Castlevania*. You can move Ryu in all directions, make him jump and thrust his sword. Jumping and clinging onto walls is allowed and necessary in order to climb onto floors. Various items can be collected that will increase your points and strength level or enhance your weapons. *Ninja Gaiden* is made up of 20 screens broken down into six "acts" that take place in both outdoor and indoor settings. At the end of every act is a creature deadlier than the others who attack you. Defeating this powerful enemy is the only way you can advance to the next act.

As Ryu, the lead character in Tecmo's *Ninja Gaiden*, you must use your ninja powers, including clinging to walls, to find your father's killers.




The "movie" sequences between separate acts (or, as the people at Tecmo hail it, the "cinema display"). Don't rush out and get the popcorn, though, because *Ninja Gaiden* doesn't really look like a movie. What it does feature is a story-telling system like that found in the Atari XE's *Karateka* or Cinemaware's computer games. In the title screen prologue, Ken Hayabusa is depicted losing to his opponent. Between the acts, sequences are played that utilize close-ups of characters and body movements. Though the animation isn't fluid, it is effective. Besides being highly entertaining, these little movies tell you important information and give you clues on accomplishing your quest. And, most important, watching these movies will also tell you what the heck you, as Ryu, are supposed to be doing anyway.

The one blessing comes in the form of unlimited game "continues." You can continue as much as you want through the 20 screen levels, and you'll need to. *Ninja Gaiden* is yet another one of those Nintendo games where you have to resort to using drastic means in order to complete it; no, not skill and patience, but finding out cheats and constantly pressing the "continue" button.

A much-too-common ailment in many new NES titles is overdone background graphics. So much detail has been put into the backgrounds of the screens (*too* much, in fact) that bottomless pits

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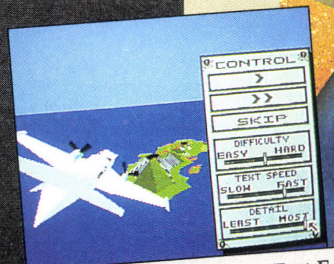
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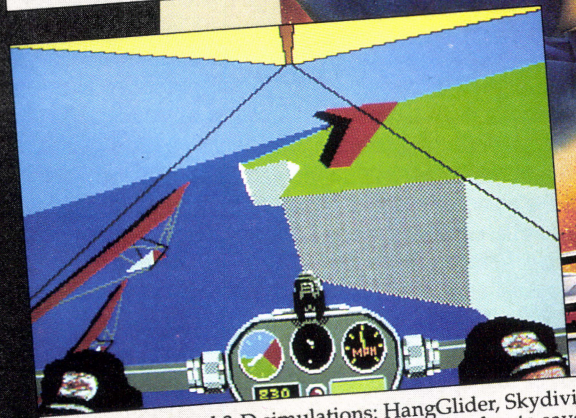
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of death look like fancy throw rugs on the floor. This can obviously lead to some problems. Namely, accidentally running Ryu to his death without the benefit of knowing what you've just done. Also, the items that can be collected, as well as your enemies, tend to camouflage themselves into the background. The outside settings look better, but the indoor scenes can appear ambiguous and even confusing to the untrained eye. Better work up your keen ninja vision for *Ninja Gaiden*.

If you're tired of martial-arts games, then, of course, *Ninja Gaiden* isn't for you. Besides its "cinema display," nothing here is really new. On the other hand, avid NES players—or anybody who likes to hear a good story retold, for that matter—might not be disappointed.

**—Howard H. Wen**

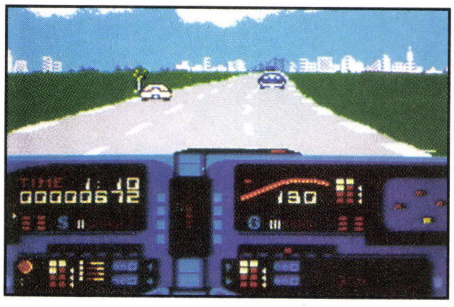
**Tecmo, Inc., 18005 S. Adria Maru Lane, Carson, CA 90746; (213) 329-5880.**

# Knight Rider

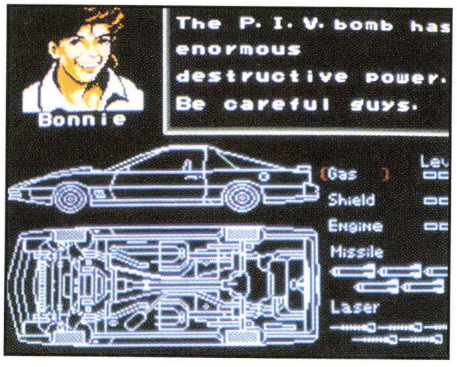
## Acclaim

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($44.95)

*Knight Rider* is an arcade-style driving and shooting game based on the hit TV series of the same name. The show has been out of production for some time—though it still runs on some stations in syndication—and many younger NES game fans may not be familiar with the name.



As the debonair Michael Knight, your mission is to rid the cities you travel through of crime, with the help of the amazing KITT car.




Bonnie, KITT's mechanic, will offer you weapons along the route and keep your computerized car in tip-top shape for your battle.

The *Knight Rider* series revolved around the crime-fighting Michael Knight and his highly technical car named KITT, a turbo-charged, computer-controlled, talking Trans Am. His assignments came from Devon, Michael's mentor and sponsor in the "Knight Foundation," and with the help of KITT's Bond-like gadgetry, Knight *always* captured the bad guys.

*Knight Rider*, the NES game, is very much like the TV series, with Michael on a cross-country mission to eliminate the criminals infesting each city. A nicely detailed picture of Devon is displayed above a map of the United States and southern Canada while he gives you your assignment. After receiving an assignment, the player then meets with Bonnie, KITT's mechanic.

To help you get through your mission, you get a detailed schematic of the fuel, shield and weapon systems. On the first mission the player chooses one extra power, such as additional fuel, shield strength, a more powerful engine, 20 missiles or 20 laser blasts for doing in the perpetrators of evil. As you advance through different levels of the game, before the next mission begins, more of these extra powers are available.

As the battle race starts, KITT takes to the road at speeds up to 250 miles per hour while you peer through the windshield. The player has a limited time to reach the outer limits of the city ahead. The dashboard displays timer, gas gauge, score, radar, weapons and other important data, and a "voice gauge," just like the one in the TV KITT car, is displayed in the center of the dash. According to the documentation, KITT "talks," but this is nothing more than a flickering of the voice-gauge graphics and some unintelligible buzzing sounds. The lack of digitized voices, something even the most simple-minded home computers can do, is a bit disappointing.

As Knight and KITT speed along the highway, they come upon enemy trucks and cars, as well as innocent drivers. Good and bad are easily distinguished by color and the fact that the enemy cars shoot at KITT constantly; your mission consists of blasting the opposing cars while avoiding the trucks. When driving over 150 miles per hour, KITT is capable of jumping over cars in front with his "turbo-boost" power. This comes in handy when the highway is particularly congested, but at the cost of a great deal of precious fuel.

When certain enemy cars are blasted, an "up" letter is awarded as the car goes up in smoke. The player maneuvers KITT to catch the letter on the hood for extra time, damage recovery, bonus missiles, extra laser blasts, more gas or an extra life. Also, if you come up behind the Knight Foundation mobile laboratory, the player can acquire additional powers for KITT from Bonnie.

As the player approaches a metropolis, the enemies become more frequent and fierce. With a time limit to reach each city, this is no opportunity to ease up on the gas pedal to concentrate on shooting. While driving, one of three primary weapons is easily selected; the unlimited firepower machine gun, TOW-2 missiles or the most deadly laser gun. The player may pause the game to make the selections, a nice feature when trying to select weapons at high speed.

Once KITT has reached the city, the player faces a very deadly enemy—a large black helicopter, a large black trailer or KARR, the stolen prototype of KITT. This enemy must be foiled in order to enter the city and move on to the next phase of the mission.

When a mission is completed, a 12-digit password is revealed. This password may be used in future games to skip directly to that level of *Knight Rider*. A practice "drive mode" is also provided, allowing the player to perfect his driving skills or simply enjoy the sights of the cities. The player has three lives per game, and a continue feature is supported up to two times before the game must be restarted from the first city.

The graphics and smooth-scrolling driving effects are well done in *Knight Rider*. The sound effects are unsophisticated, but the turbo-boost jumping feature of KITT is rather impressive. The 15 different cities provide lots of interesting scenery and challenge, but the game play does get repetitive after a while. Overall, *Knight Rider* is a decent game for fans of the once-popular TV series.

**—Matthew J. W. Ratcliff**

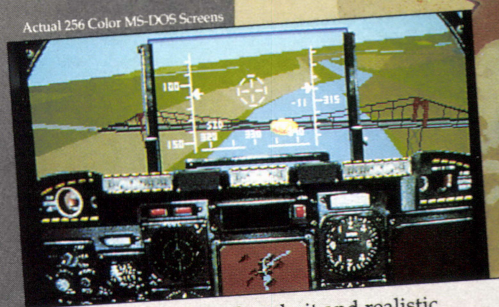
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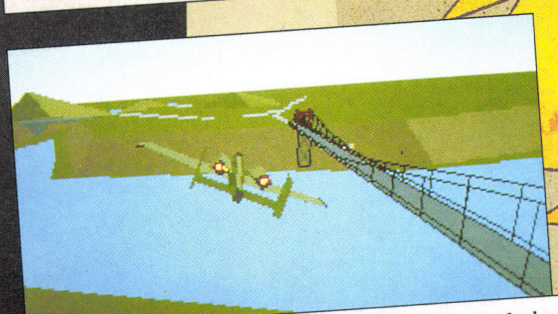

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by Bill Kunkel and Joyce Worley

## Ooga booga!

Scare you? Sorry, we just wanted to get everyone in the mood. Horror is, after all, a tricky business. In the normal course of events, people seek to avoid experiences redolent with fear, horror and shock. Yet films and books dealing with the most graphic forms of violence, grue and terror regularly tote up healthy receipts at the cash register.

In other words, under certain controlled conditions, people obviously *love* to be scared. To that end, software creators have periodically attempted to integrate spooky characters and situations into their work, sometimes successfully, sometimes not.

The first authentically scary moment in the history of electronic gaming came, ironically, in a program that was not overtly intended to be frightening. Lucasfilm's *Rescue on Fractalus* (Epyx) is a science-fiction contest in which users pilot a spacecraft over the surface of a barren, craggy planet in search of downed Earth pilots. When the wreckage of a ship is sighted, the player lands his own craft and opens the hatch to permit the downed flyer to come aboard. On very rare occasions, however, these flyers are not human at all, but Jaggi—members of the hostile race with whom the humans are contesting. The Jaggi kill the pilots and don their spacesuits, hoping to lure a rescue craft, then, once aboard, destroy it.



*Nightmare on Elm Street (LJN for NES)*

The only discernable difference between an authentic flyer and a Jaggi in sheep's clothing is the slight, greenish tint a Jaggi gives to the ordinarily silver space helmet. If the player spots the Jaggi before it reaches his ship, he can take off, incinerating the alien fiend in a blast of propulsion rockets. Otherwise, the player is in for a genuinely startling experience: The Jaggi, its helmet discarded, rears up directly in front of the player's windshield. The horrible creature roars once then, its massive fists clenched tightly, begins to smash away at the windshield. Huge fissures appear in the glass, and then, a second later, the entire shield explodes, and the game fades to black.

The appearance of the Jaggi was a real shocker for gamers in the early '80s. It wasn't mentioned in the instructions and, so, came as a total surprise to most users. Experienced players often sat for hours while novices tested their skills, just waiting for their companion's reactions at the appearance of the Jaggi.

Certainly, there had been haunted-house adventures and games featuring ghosts, bats and similar spook-house trappings before *Fractalus*, but none of them could seriously aspire to frighten users. The lack of sophisticated graphics, animation and sound made any real attempt to create a creepy ambiance fairly futile. Block-like graphics and beep-boop sound effects were hardly the stuff of dark and stormy nights, after all.



*Captain Blood*

## Quests for Chills

The first attempts at games that could frighten us were text adventures, such as Galley and Lawrence's *Moonmist* (Infocom), a haunted-house mystery set on the atmospheric Cornwall coast. The player is urgently invited to an ancient castle by an old lover who fears her life is in danger from the spectral "White Lady"

who supposedly haunts the castle tower. The lack of graphics was actually an advantage at this point in the development of computer entertainment, as scenes were limited only by the imagination of the authors and users. Even so, there's quite a difference between curling up with a scary novel in front of a fireplace on a winter's eve and sitting at a work station typing in two-word commands. The stop-and-start nature of text adventures constantly put a crimp in the story's ability to build tension, as did the player's inability to solve any of the puzzles that constitute the game portion of the adventure.

Other spooky text adventures include *Frankenstein, Dracula* and *Wolfman*, all by CRL. Illustrated text adventures include CRL's *Jack the Ripper*, the classic *Mystery Fun House* and several Scott Adams Adventures, such as *Voodoo Island*.

In recent years, publishers attempted to bring shudders and shivers to the modern adventure game, with sophisticated graphics and streamlined command entry. ICOM's *The Uninvited* (Mindscape) is a traditional haunted-house adventure using the point-and-click interface established in the earlier *Deja Vu*. The player is cast as a solitary explorer, searching through a house full of ghosts, trapdoors and secret passageways. *The Uninvited* even offers an introductory gambit right out of a 1940s haunted mansion flick: The player is driving along a country road and has an accident. The car is wrecked (and about to explode), and there's simply nowhere to go—except, of course, into that creepy-looking mansion up on a hill in the distance.


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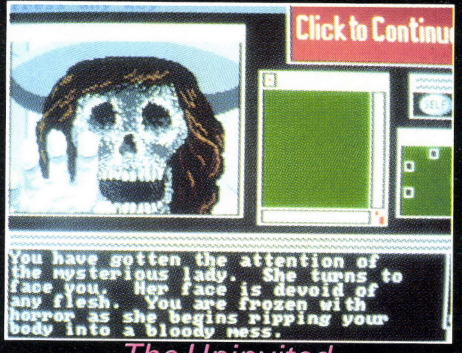
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*The Movie Monster Game*

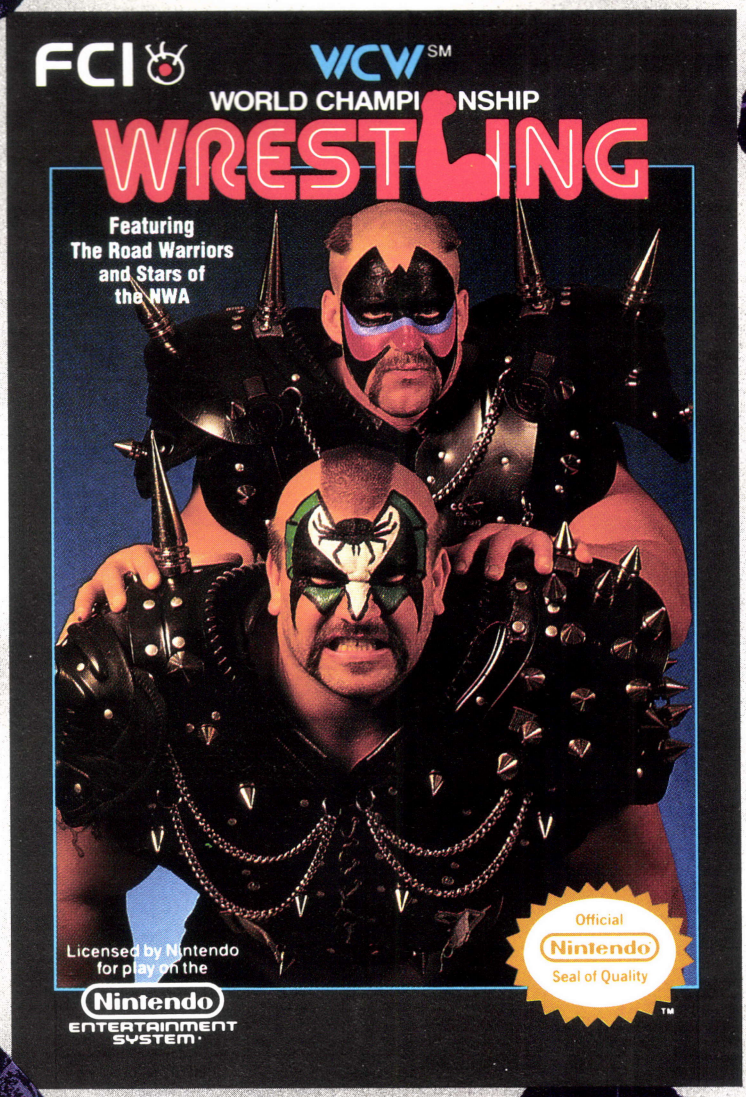



*The Uninvited*



*Ghosts 'n' Goblins*

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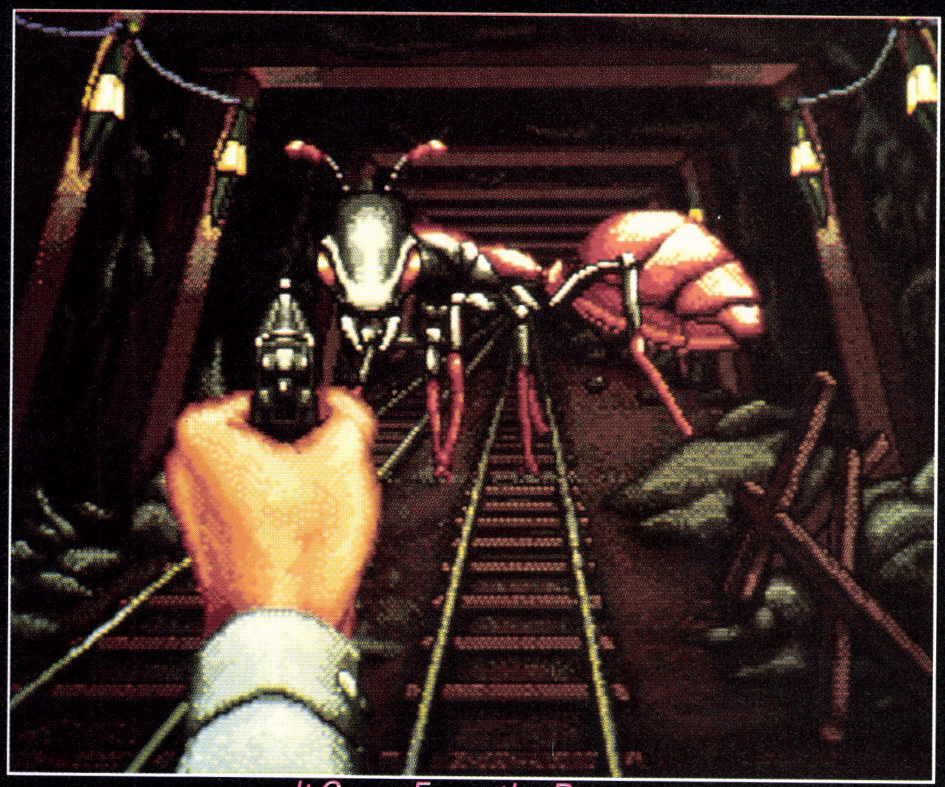

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*It Came From the Desert*

*The Uninvited* is notably the finest use of the ICOM adventure interface. The player stumbles through this fascinating, if somewhat musty, old mansion, searching not for jewels or magic spells but for the secret of the house itself.

Perhaps the most popular haunted-house adventure was Lucasfilm's excellent *Maniac Mansion* (Activision). The plot, in which the player-character explores a haunted house, is nothing new, but the game interface and the cleverness of its execution helped make this a genuine cult classic with a large audience on both sides of the Atlantic.

The trappings of horror and psychological terror are expertly blended by the Murry siblings in *Manhunter: New York* (Sierra), a graphic adventure in which the player starts the game on the wrong side of the ethical fence. In this story, Earth has been conquered by a race of alien eyeballs. The computerist is cast as a manhunter, one of the human beings who hunt down their fellows at the command of their alien masters. The player proceeds through a startling and sometimes violent adventure that turns on an unusual moral dilemma: Does the player remain a manhunter, or does he turn on the aliens and fight their tyranny?

The newest entry into the scary adventure sweepstakes is *Personal Nightmare* (Box Office). This menu- and icon-driven illustrated adventure by Mike Woodruffe incorporates many scenes derived from the classic horror genre. The sound and graphics are outstanding, and cinematic effects coupled with extensive use of animation create scenes with the power to shock the player.

The same designer and publisher is working on a game based on the TV horror-movie hostess with the mostest, Elvira. The game will be published first in England under the Horrorsoft banner, but it could reach the U.S. before the end of the year.

## Big Monsters

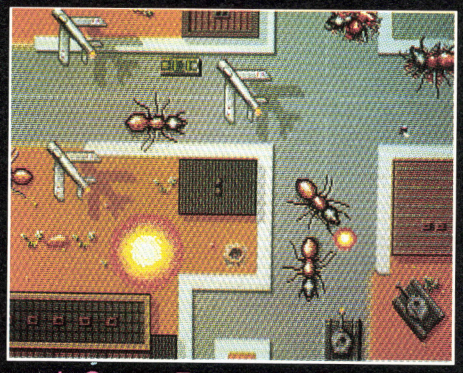
One of the most popular categories of spooky games is the one that deals with giant monsters, behemoths, dinosaurs and colossal versions of ordinary lifeforms.

The first product to exploit our ancient fascination with really, really *big* monsters was *Crush, Crumble and Chomp* from Automated Simulations. Automated Simulations, of course, later became Epyx, and *C,C and C* was eventually restyled as *The Movie Monster Game*, a delightful romp through several of the world's major cities as Godzilla or one of several other mega-monster staples. Of course, life isn't all beer and skittles, even if you *are* 50 feet tall and breathe fire. There's the army, for example, with their tanks and jet fighters, and they can really get a guy down.

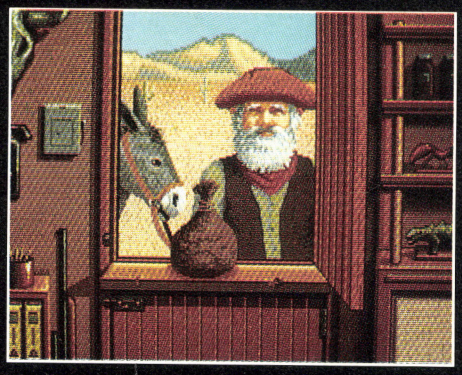
Other electronic entertainments that employ the big boys are *Rampage* (Activision) and *Aargh!* (Arcadia). *Rampage* is an excellent adaptation of the classic coin-op. Players control a variety of antisocial behemoths in an attempt to tear down buildings and generally snuff out life in a major metropolitan area before the army arrives and poops out the party. *Aargh!* is basically a clone of *Rampage* with different monsters. The object is to destroy buildings and retrieve the golden eggs which periodically appear on-screen.

The major difference between *The Movie Monster Game* and the others is that *TMMG* uses a realistic perspective, with monsters free to move over large land areas, whereas *Rampage* and *Aargh!* stick to side perspective with action limited to the on-screen area.

The most recent addition to the big monster game battery is also the best ever: Cinemaware's spectacular *It Came From the Desert*. This chilling adventure is based on 1950s SF-horror films like *Tarantula, Beginning of the End, The*



*It Came From the Desert*



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*Deadly Mantis* and, especially, the first and foremost of the big bug epics, Gordon Douglas' *Them!*

The player is cast as the handsome young protagonist who first discovers that there are gigantic insects among us while tooling across the desert. The player has a variety of vehicles at his command, including a jeep, tank and helicopter, and they'll all be needed before this menace can be quelled. The visuals on *It Came From the Desert* are astonishing, the cinematic ambiance delightful and the play value is strong. This may well be the strongest entry yet from a major new publisher.

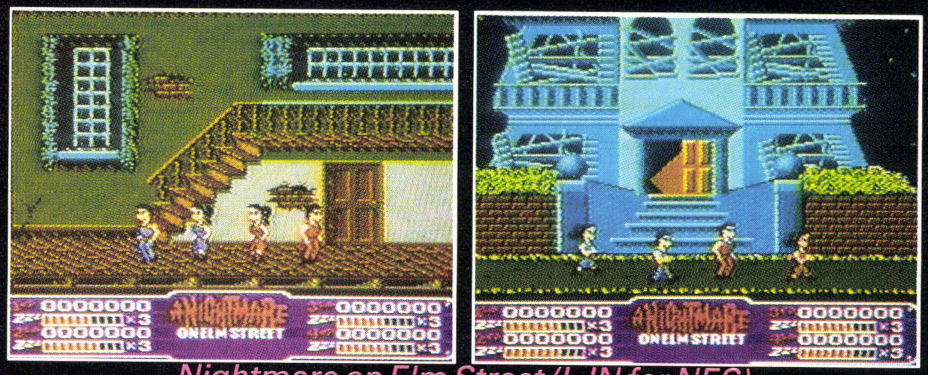
Finally, a quick mention of the excellent *SimCity* (Maxis), in which the user creates and runs either actual cities or creates his own town from scratch. Once a city is up and running, the user can send disasters down upon it, including fires, floods, earthquakes—and even a giant, Godzilla-like monster who emerges from the sea and lays waste to any area it passes through!

## Arcade Spook House

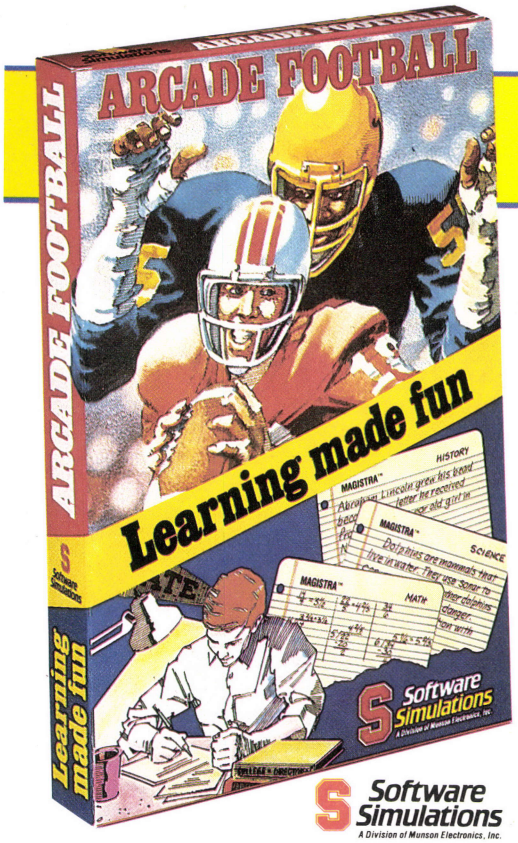
The most popular category of games featuring monsters, however, remains arcade games. Generally speaking, these games don't make special use of the creepy characters; vampires, ghosts and goblins replace space aliens or orcs as integers in basically generic action games.

*Warlock* is one of the better examples of the monster arcade genre. The player character moves through a dual-level scenario of graveyards and catacombs, killing off a cavalcade of zombies, ghosts and demons along the way. The delightful graphics and clever animation elevate this side-perspective shoot-out beyond the level of a typical mindless shoot-out.

*Vampire's Empire,* from Digitek, is another visually-appealing action game using stock horror characters. The player-character in this scrolling, side-view contest moves up and down the vast stairways that wind endlessly through this vampiric netherworld. The action is




*Nightmare on Elm Street (LJN for NES)*


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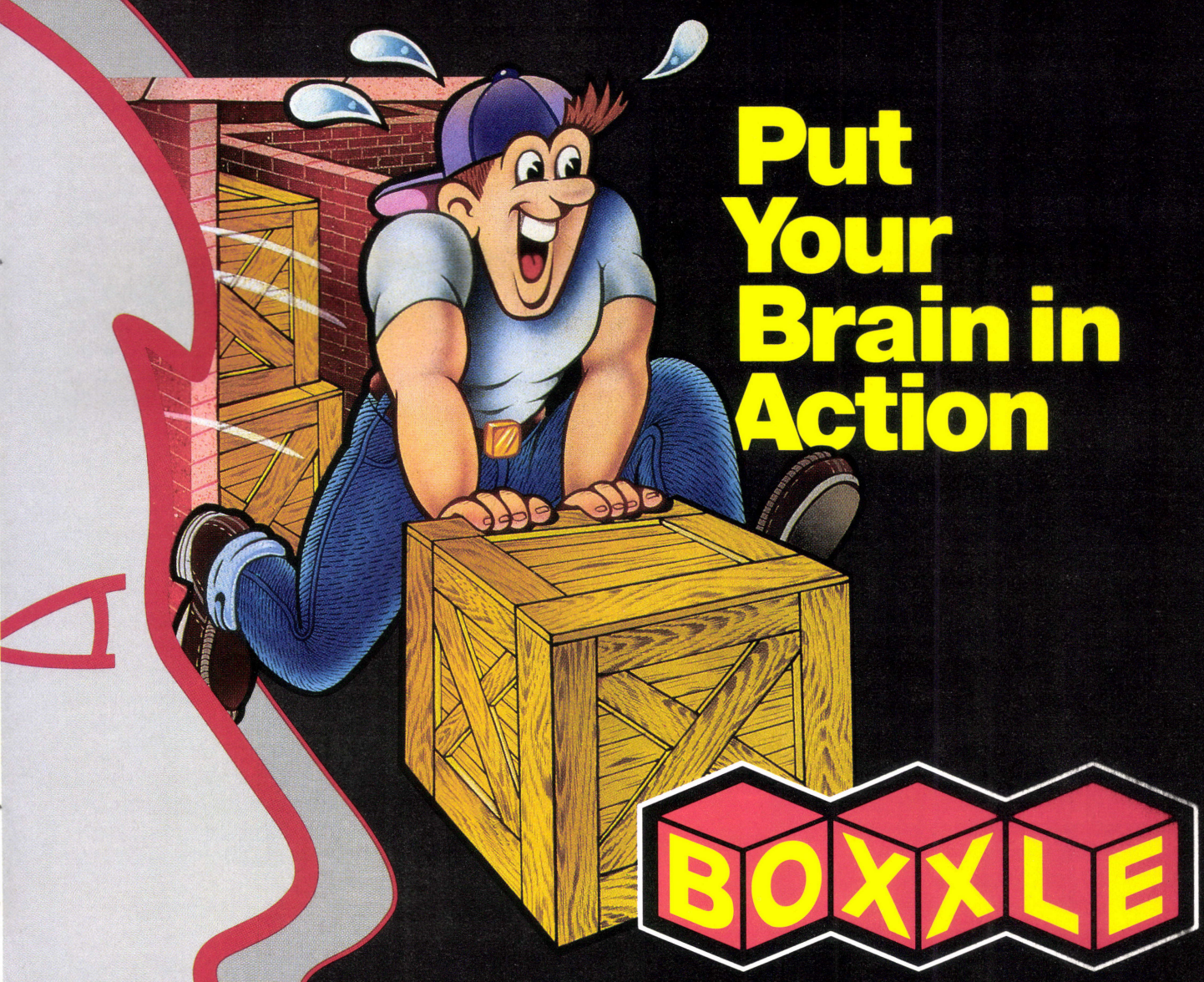
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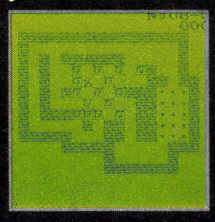


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fairly humdrum, but the slick graphics certainly are first rate.

*Baal*, from Psygnosis, exploits the visual imagery created by artist H. R. Giger for the film *Alien* to create an action-strategy game with insectoid monsters and a sweaty, heavy- metal look. This side-perspective contest features multidirectional scrolling through three multilevel scenarios comprising 250 screens, 100 monsters and 400 traps. It's nothing special, but the graphics *are* striking, and the monsters look great.

The newest addition to this category is Accolade's *Frightmare*, a platform game comprising over 80 levels with seven scenarios or "dream states," each more harrowing than the last, as the player battles the time limit in an attempt to survive the night. Zombies, werewolves, serpents and even old Lucifer himself show up during the contest.

There is certainly no shortage of monsters in the video-game universe, either. Capcom's *Ghosts and Goblins*, as well as Nintendo's own *Castlevania* and its sequel, *Simon's Quest*, have been popular entries on the Nintendo since their release. Also scheduled for release is Sunsoft's *Fester's Quest*, based on the popular *Addams Family* cartoons and TV show. Aliens have descended on the Addams' hometown and kidnapped the human population, leaving the *inhuman* Fester and the other members of the Addams Family to rescue them.

Freddy fans will have two *Nightmare on Elm Street* games to look forward to. Sharedata will be releasing *Nightmare on Elm Street* for various computers (it should be available by the time you read this). The setting is deep inside Freddy's house, and, of course, all events occur in a dream–well, nightmare.

LJN Toys hopes to have their NES version of *Nightmare on Elm Street* out in early 1990, though at press time it was still being developed. LJN also plans on bringing a Freddy game to Nintendo's Game Boy system.

Also of interest to NES players is *Friday the 13th* (LJN), a game that mirrors the sequel-crazy movies of the same name. In addition, Bandai has released *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* for the NES, in which the player must try to keep Dr. J (not the basketball player, mind you) from getting too irritated by his surroundings. This will cause him to transform into his hideous alter ego.

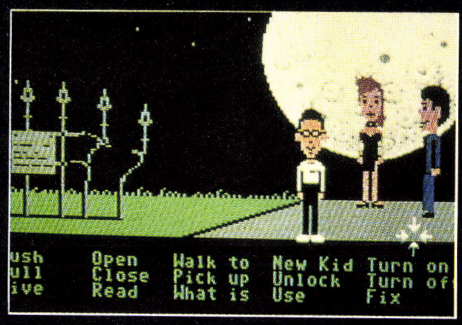
Sega fright-freaks, meanwhile, can check out *Ghost House*, a multilevel, side-view action game in which a player-character must retrieve hidden jewels while avoiding the various spooks patrolling the mansion.

Sega Genesis owners will also have the sequel to the previously noted *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* available to them in the form of *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts*. This challenging fight for your life in a graveyard looks identical to the arcade game.

Finally, TurboGrafx-16 fanatics can get some chills up their spine with the eerie *Alien Crush* pinball game. Though this one stands alone on its pinball re-creation, the setting is unlike any flipper table ever built: Monsters pop out of every crevice of the game, a slathering beast swallows your sphere for bonus points and various creatures, skulls and insects swarm around in the bonus screen. *Alien Crush* uses the popular Giger-like graphics in stunning form.




*Maniac Mansion*




## Movie Monsters

Several of the biggest screen hits in recent years were horror films, and several of *them* made their way to computer and video-game formats. This includes the number-one midnight movie of all time, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (Electric Dreams), *Aliens* (Activision) and *Predator* (computer versions by Activision).

In *Rocky Horror* the player is cast as either Brad or Janet, those unfortunate visitors to the mansion of Dr. Frank N. Furter and company. While "(Let's Do the) Time Warp" plays in the background, the player-character's clothes are stolen, and he or she must go on a room-to-room search in order to recover them. There's plenty to see and do in this bizarre homestead, and it makes for a pretty fair action game while remaining faithful to the source material.

Steve Cartwright, meanwhile, used many of the techniques he mastered while creating the *Hacker* (Activision) games to create *Aliens*, the best movie adaptation of *any* kind in the history of electronic gaming. The game is broken up into several sequences right out of James Cameron's pulse-pounding film. The best scenario is one in which the player monitors four patrols as they move along the catwalks underneath the planet's surface. By switching from monitor to monitor, the user can assist each of the patrols as they invariably run into the monsters of the game's title. The game builds its tension similar to the movie, climaxing in a battle with the alien queen herself.

*Predator* (Activision) is reminiscent of another film adaptation, *Platoon*, only here, in addition to fighting human enemies, there's an alien big-game hunter on the prowl to be dealt with. The game uses standard side perspective and arms the player-character with assault rifles, grenades and flame throwers, all of which will seem fairly feeble when face-to-face with the Predator himself!

## Monsters, Monsters and More Monsters!

There's no question about it, people like monsters and other scary things—so long as they remain part of the fictional universe. As the audio-visual capabilities of home computers and video-game systems increase, it seems inevitable that horror will become an even bigger part of the software universe.

So brew up that hot chocolate, stoke up the fireplace and boot up the electronic game system, because the computer may well be the "shock theater" of the next decade.

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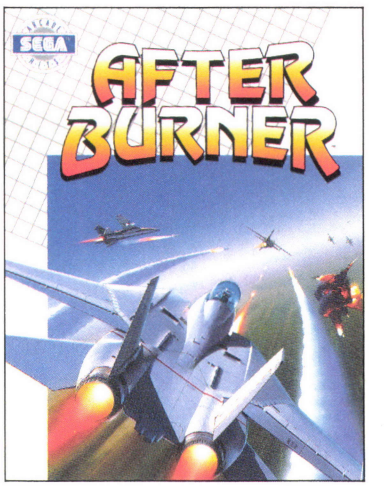
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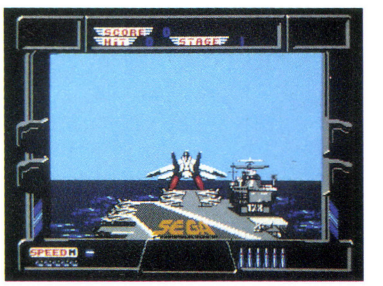
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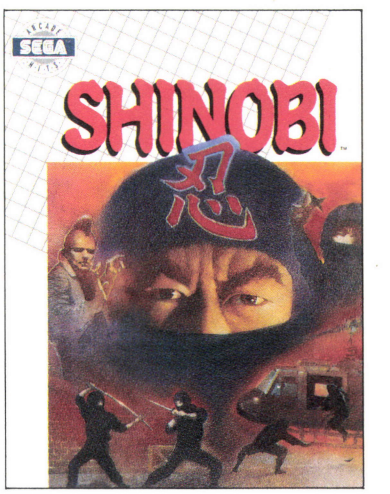
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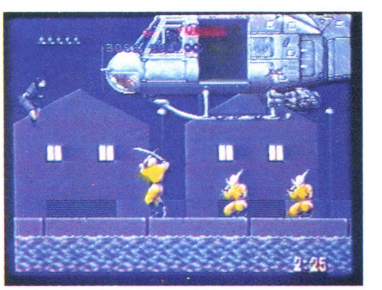



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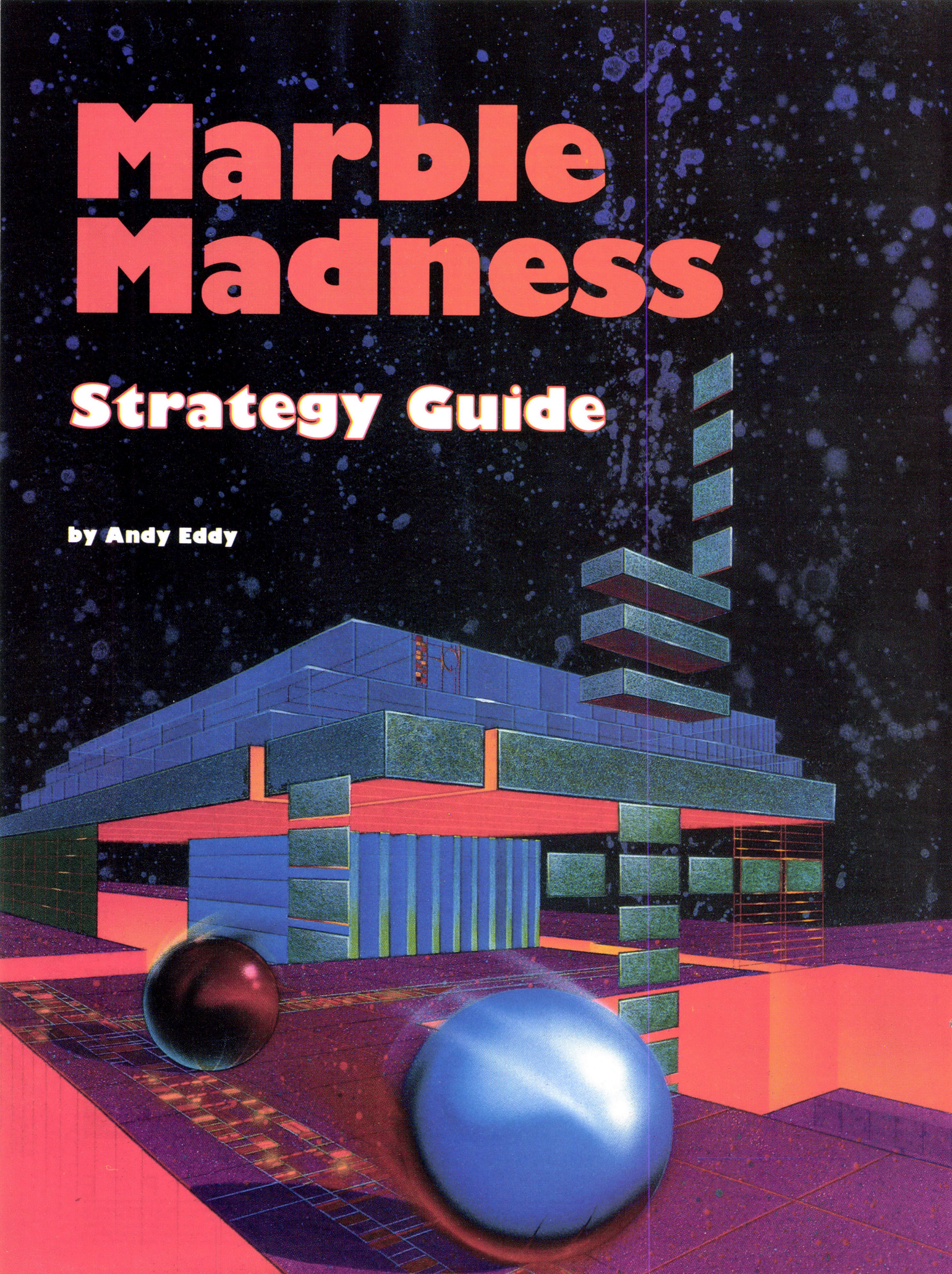
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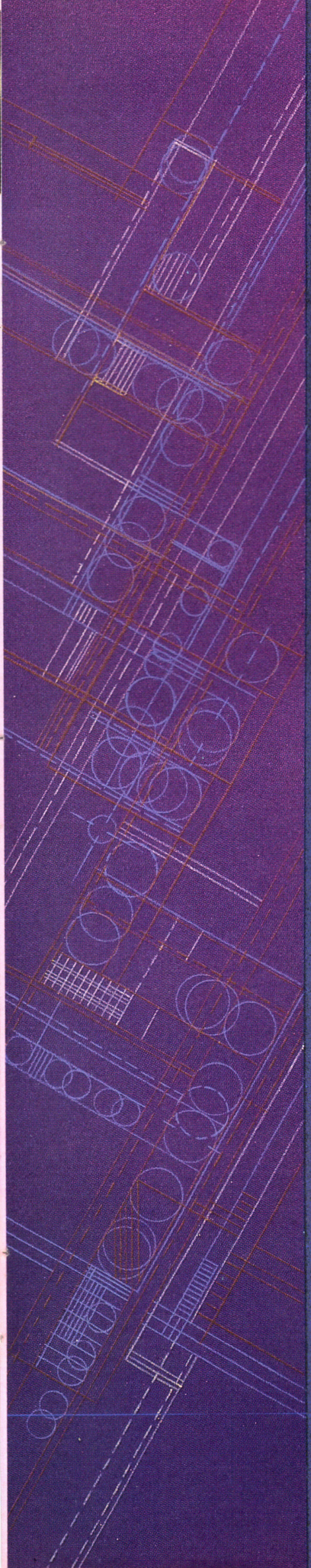
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# Marble Madness

## Strategy Guide

by Andy Eddy





When I was younger, I had a toy called a labyrinth. This game of dexterity had two knobs, each one tilting the top level of the wooden "table" in a direction—left/right and forward/back. To begin the game, a marble would be placed at the location labeled Start. The object of the game was to ever so slightly turn the knobs so that the marble would follow the path that was painted on the surface of the labyrinth. This in itself was hard enough, but making the contest even more challenging were the holes that lined the pathway; falling in a hole would end your game.

Now that video games have replaced the bulky games of the past, you can compete in a similar manner on a TV or monitor. And one of the older arcade classics, *Marble Madness*, puts the labyrinthian concept into a cartridge for the NES (Milton Bradley) and on disk for C-64, Apple II/GS, IBM PC, Amiga and Atari ST computers (Electronic Arts). Though it replaces the knob control with simple joystick or control-pad manipulation, *MM* is enhanced with a series of enemy creatures that no labyrinth could ever contain. (This strategy guide uses the Milton Bradley/NES version as a reference, but computer players can use these hints to help them get through any version of *MM*.)

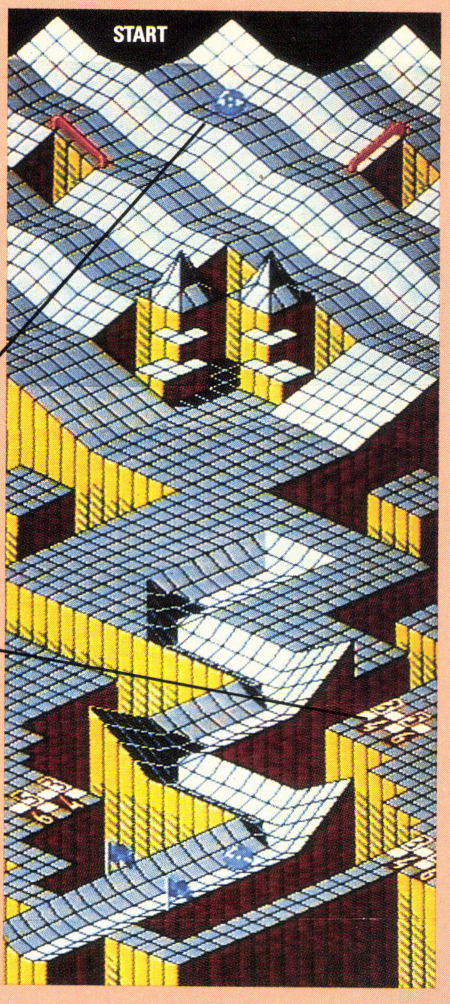
The object in this game is to guide your marble over six terrains, each containing winding passages, tunnels, ice sections and other hazards. In fact, when you get to Level 5, which is called the silly race, your control is turned all backward—what's uphill becomes downhill, and there's even a part of the puzzle where enemies help you. Getting through all six mazes is extremely difficult, requiring precision control over your marble.

## Maze 1—Practice Race

**This is very simple to complete, but you can take your time here to practice your control. After this race, from Race 2 on, any leftover time on the clock will be added to your next race. Here, on the other hand, there is no rush to finish.**

**There is a lot of wide open space here to test the effects of your "A" button, which turbocharges your marble. Practice precision cornering, because it will come in handy later on.**

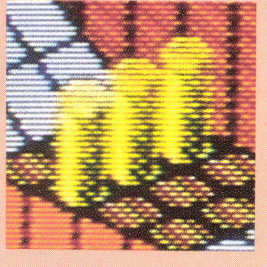
**The numbers here and on the left side correspond to bonus points. If you launch your marble, using the "A" button for speed, you can fly over the canyon and add between 3,000 and 6,000 points to your score. What you have to be careful of is not falling off the edge—if you finish the game, you will be penalized for each time your ball drops in a chasm.**




## *Hazard List*



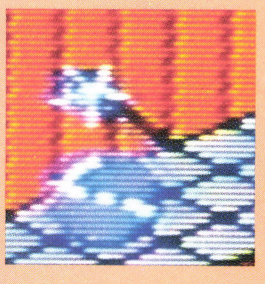
• *Black Steely*—This highly polished threat cruises a section of the maze trying to knock off any competition that comes its way. You can, in turn, try to knock *it* off the edge or shatter it by running into it, but the best strategy is to save time and steer clear of it.



• *Bumpers*—These nasties also appear only on Level 4, but you can easily take another path to bypass them totally (the best choice). If you do come across them, they either halt your progress like a wall or, if you end up on top of them when they pop out of the surface, fling you in the air backwards.



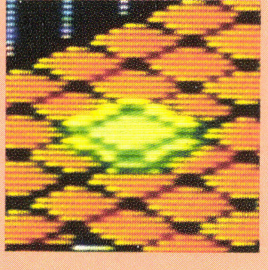
• *Hoovers*—Three vacuums line your Race 4 path. If you are too slow, they will, piece by piece, suck you off the surface of the pathway. If you are reckless about your marble movement, you'll run into one of the vacuums, causing your ball to become dazed. Once you practice you'll have no trouble maneuvering around them.



• *Magic Wand*—This is a random bonus that crops up and gives you ten extra seconds on your timer. If you can get one of these during a run, you'll be much better off.



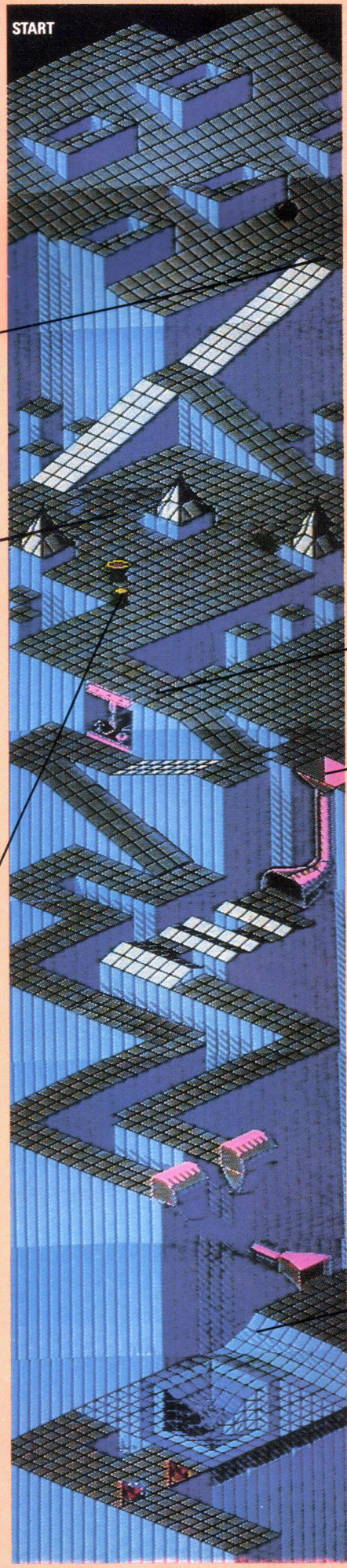
• *Hammers*—You'll come upon these wildly swinging tools only once in the game, but they are hard to get past safely. They pop out of the surface of the maze and usually result in your ball getting bopped off the edge.



• *Acid Puddles*—As you can imagine, acid is hazardous to your marble, dissolving it in an instant. What makes it even harder is that the little pools move around on the surface of the maze. Drive carefully around these dangers.



• *Birds*—Appearing only in Race 5, these winged creatures cross the path you want to take, slowing up your progress. If they hit you, your marble will turn into a spray of fragments.




**Maze 2— Beginner Race**

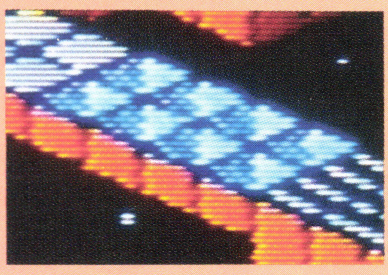
**Your first challenge here is the Black Steely. You can try to smash him or knock him off the edge, for a bonus between 1,000 and 10,000 points, but it's difficult and not worth the time. Cruise past him because you'll need the time for later levels.**

**If you go as fast as possible here, you can actually roll out of the screen. Don't worry, though, because you'll be held up by the first meeting with the worms. If you keep moving, you'll be safe from them.**

**This drawbridge goes up and down every few seconds. Don't rush over it, and you won't go out of control.**

**While it looks like an easier path, it's best not to go this way because of the bumpy, uneven path after the tunnel.**

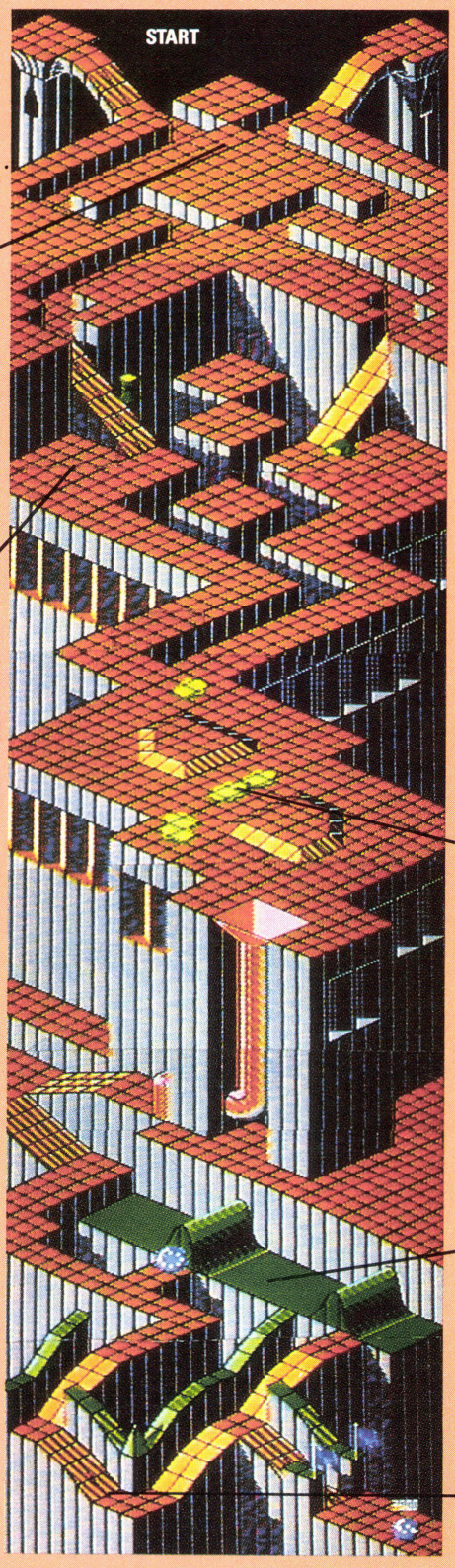
• *Marble Munchers*—These little green worms are the most frequently seen creatures you'll come across in *MM*. They are strong beasts with a placement so firm that if you run into them, they'll daze your marble. The real danger from these slithering enemies is the powerful leaps they occasionally take. If one lands on your globe, the worm will swallow it whole.



• *Ice*—In many video games, ice is put on the path to mess up your control; *MM* is no different. When you hit ice, you'd better be pointed in the right direction or else you'll spin off out of control.

**As you're going through the tunnel, put on the brakes and you end up on the first square outside. If you go full speed along that first row of squares, you'll be safe over the ice. If you deviate from this path, you'll likely get taken for a ride and end up in that hole on the other side.**

## Maze 3—Intermediate Race



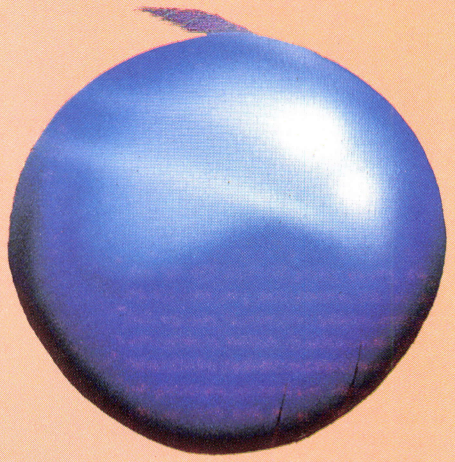

Don't go too quickly through this section, or you'll bounce out of control from wall to wall. You can get through this quickly if you anticipate your turns just before you need to make them.

Here's another meeting with a worm. Even more trouble is the corner at the bottom of the downhill.

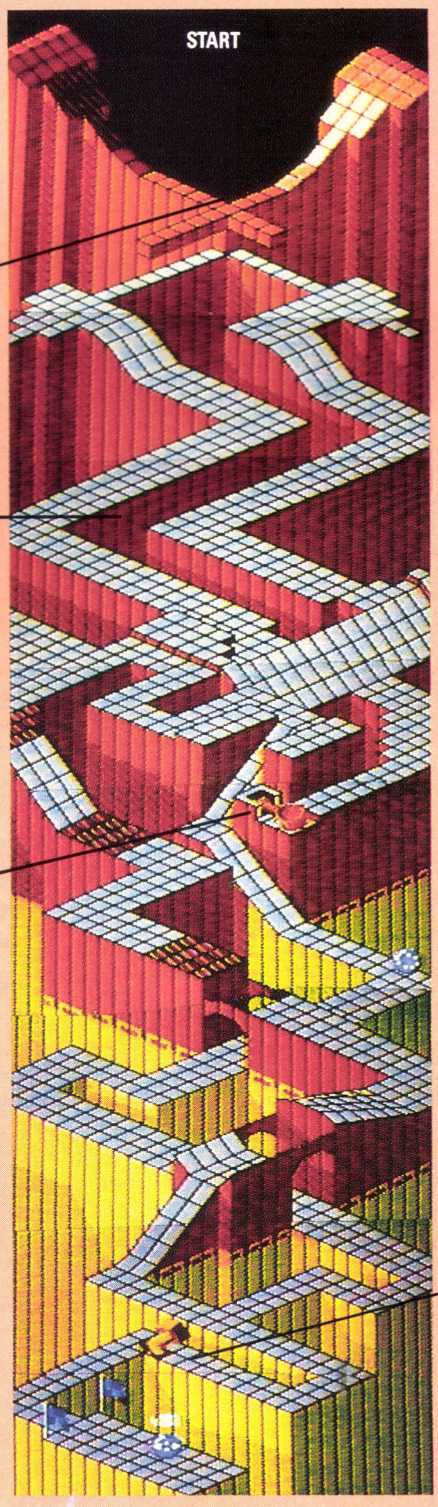
These acid puddles are only a slight problem. If you take a straight line from one side to the other, you'll have a good chance of getting through without trouble.

They've provided a shortcut, but it's not that easy to get through. Position yourself at the entrance of the shortcut, then wait until a wave passes. If you get behind it and take a quick turn at the end, you'll only need to take two more turns to be at the goal. (No, you can't take the green path.)

You can take the roundabout path, but the uphills and turns will slow you down.



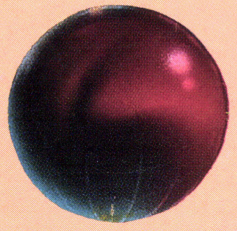
Maze 4—Aerial Race



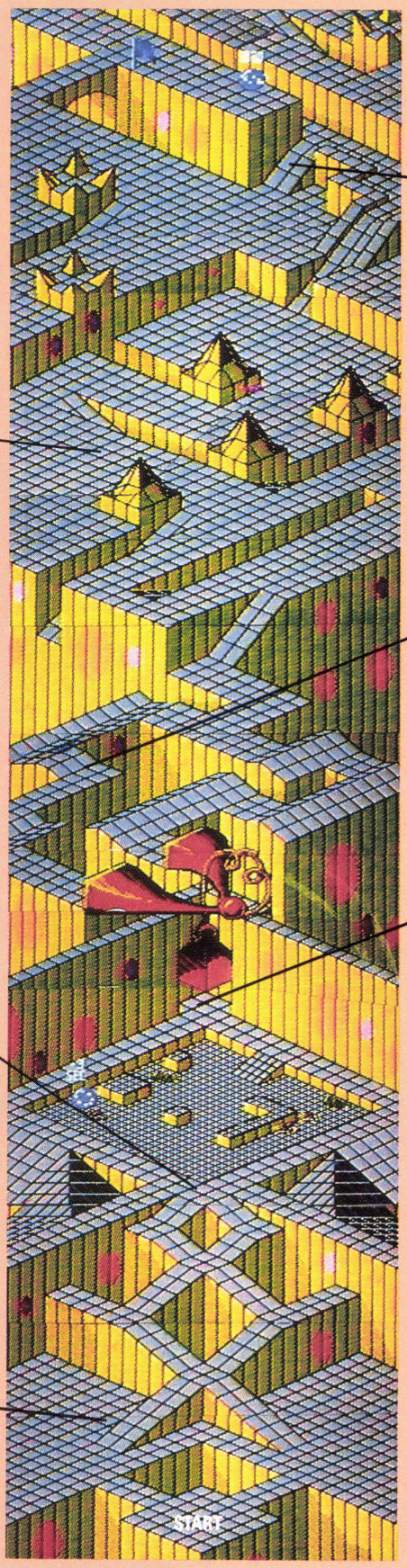

Though you can't control your descent, you should put on the brakes right as you land so you don't go off the edge.

You'll run into vacuums at this spot, but they won't cause too much trouble if you keep your speed up.

This catapult will sling you to the platform on the other side, and you'll have two choices of paths. The left side will take you over bumpers, which are hard to get past without serious impediment. The other path is a bit safer, but it will really test your turning abilities.



Here are the nasty hammers. To get by them, you'll have to be as close to the edge of the path as possible so the hammers don't hit you. When you get to the other side, it's clear sailing.




This small downhill—well, uphill—is hard to get by unless you have a good amount of speed built up. If you have to, you can drop off the side of the ramp.

This area contains lots of birds crossing your path. Roll your marble carefully, and there'll be no conflict.

These paths are difficult to negotiate. Take your time, and remember that up is down and down is up.

This chute will take you up to the next level, but I've never seen the ball end up on the right-side path.

When you get to this area, you'll see some enemy creatures, but don't avoid them. If you run over each one, you'll get a three-second bonus.

Maze 5—Silly Race

Before the race starts, you'll see one important line: "Everything you know is wrong." For example, when you hit the first uphills, you'll find that they act like downhills. To save a few seconds at the start, go to the left because you'll be lined up perfectly.





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Maze 6—Ultimate Race

While this level is small, it contains many challenges to keep you busy. The first is minor, and if you start here and go over the ramp, you'll end up going through the hole and pop out of the chute on the right side.

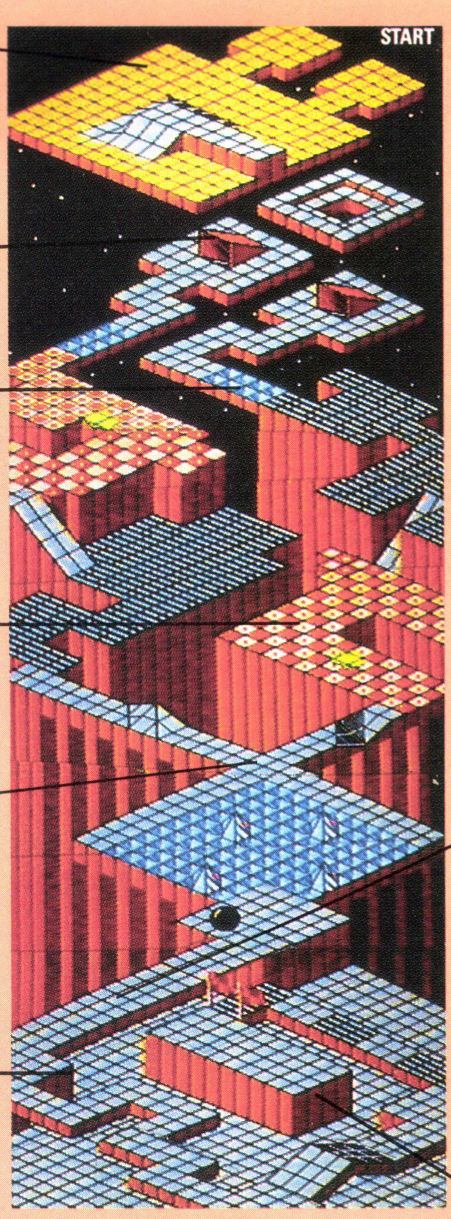
I've never seen the marble come out of this opening.

Make sure you are going straight when you hit this ice.

Be careful when you drop out of this slope; this surface is hard to maneuver on. The acid puddle that floats around here makes it even more difficult.

Again, make sure you are going at the correct angle when you get on the ice. Position the marble at the intersection of the two paths, then go diagonally to the other side. Immediately get away from the Black Steely.

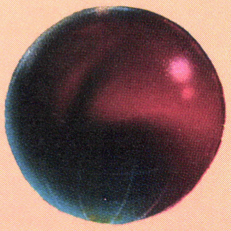
There are a couple of safe locations that you can use to rest and analyze the path. Don't waste too much time, though; instead, use your pause to take a breather.




This diagram is slightly misleading, because sections of the path appear and disappear constantly. (As a help to you, we are showing it in its "complete" form.) You have to control your marble perfectly and quickly so you don't fall to your demise.

Here's the goal, signaling that your challenge is over!

With perserverance you'll find yourself on top of the high-score table. Don't let up, and let the good times roll!

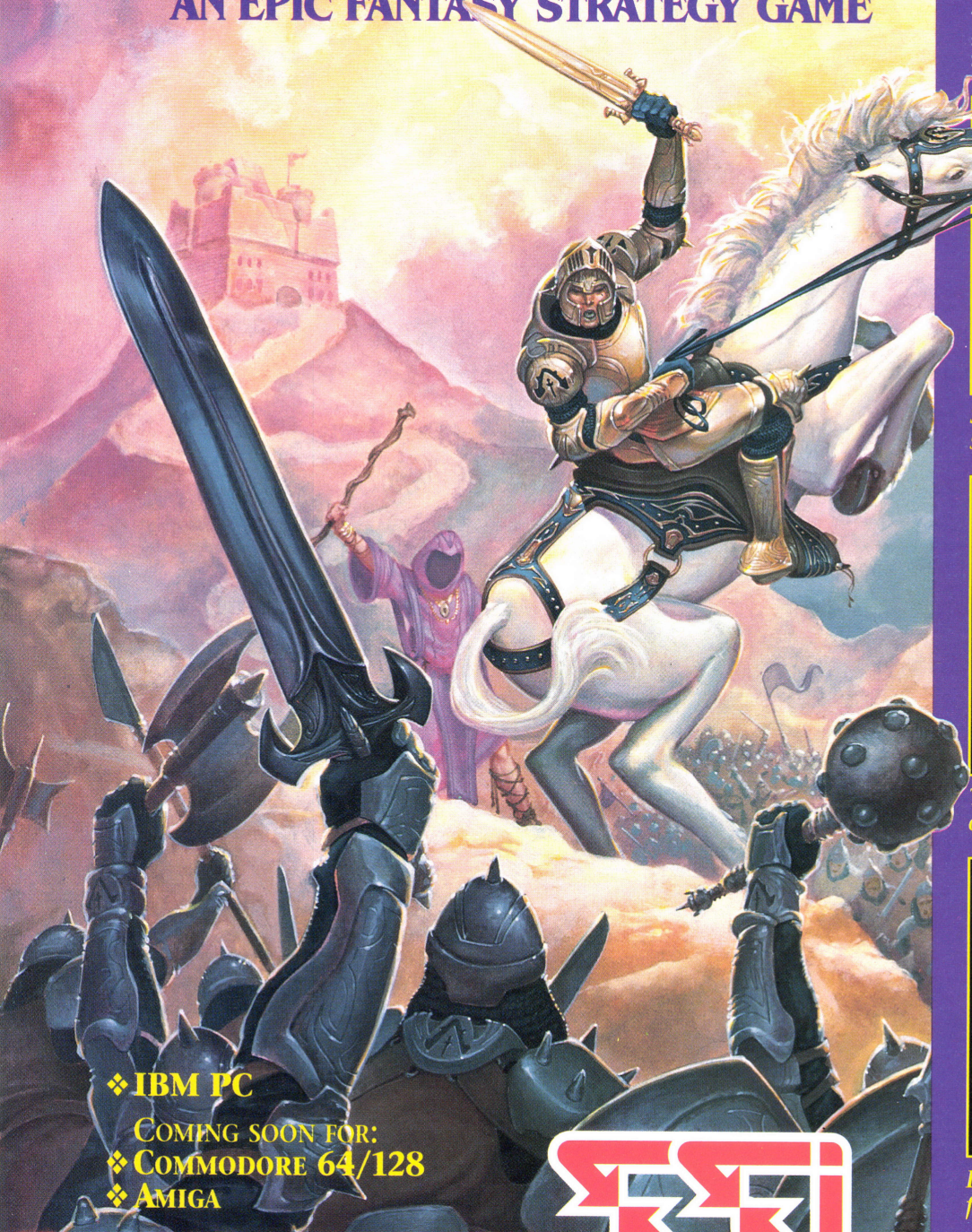




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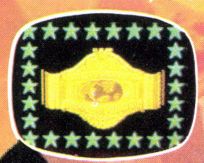
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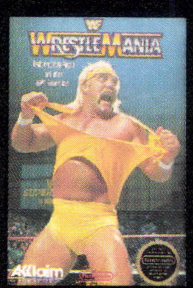
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# PAWNS OF THE COMPUTER

## THE BEST OF SUPER CHESS

by Joyce Worley

No game has been computerized more often. I make this statement while sitting in a room stuffed with karate contests, flight simulators and baseball games. But even those three often-replicated entertainments can't hold a candle to the biggest strategic entertainment of them all, the game of games, the world's most played, most enduring, most widely known contest.

The history of chess lies in antiquity, and its fame has spread to literally every nation on earth. No wonder, then, that this is the contest most often programmed for on-screen play. Among the first games on early non-graphic, mainframe computers, it remains equally challenging to this day.

The reasons are simple, often quoted and very logical. Chess programs are always in demand because chess players constantly search for suitable opponents at their own skill level. The reason programs are redone over and over, with more and more refinements, is that the computer chess opponent is not yet as good as it will be. Chess has not been "conquered" by the computer. Until the perfect chess program has been written, one that's victorious against *all* comers, there will continue to be a steady stream of newer-and-better chess players.

The new brainbuster programs offer pawn-pushers more than just a chance to get their socks knocked off. For most players, improvements in the computer's ability to win at top skill levels are fairly unimportant. Current state-of-the-art programs give a tussle to anyone less skilled than a master. It's the features, frills, special abilities, fancy extras and newly devised player options that keep even average chess players in the market for new software.




*Sargon IV*

The frills and special options are, in fact, the meat of the story in the current batch of big-name computer chess programs: Each of the top programs plays a mean game of chess. Each one claims victory over the others, in one competition or another. The excellence of the computer opponents is unquestioned; state-of-the-art chess has crossed the threshold into master level. The important differences in the programs, for anyone but a grandmaster, are those features that actually improve the player's performance through computer tutoring, make playing easier and feature a more attractive screen.

### *Sargon* Still A Winner

*Sargon IV* (Spinnaker for IBM PC and Macintosh), written by Dan & Kathe Spracklen, is a masterful new edition of the classic program that dominated computer-chess circles for most of this decade. The Spracklens continue to refine their chess problem-solving tree with each new *Sargon*. The current game combines strong algorithms with outstanding 3-D graphics, a complete range of player options and tutorial and hint functions.

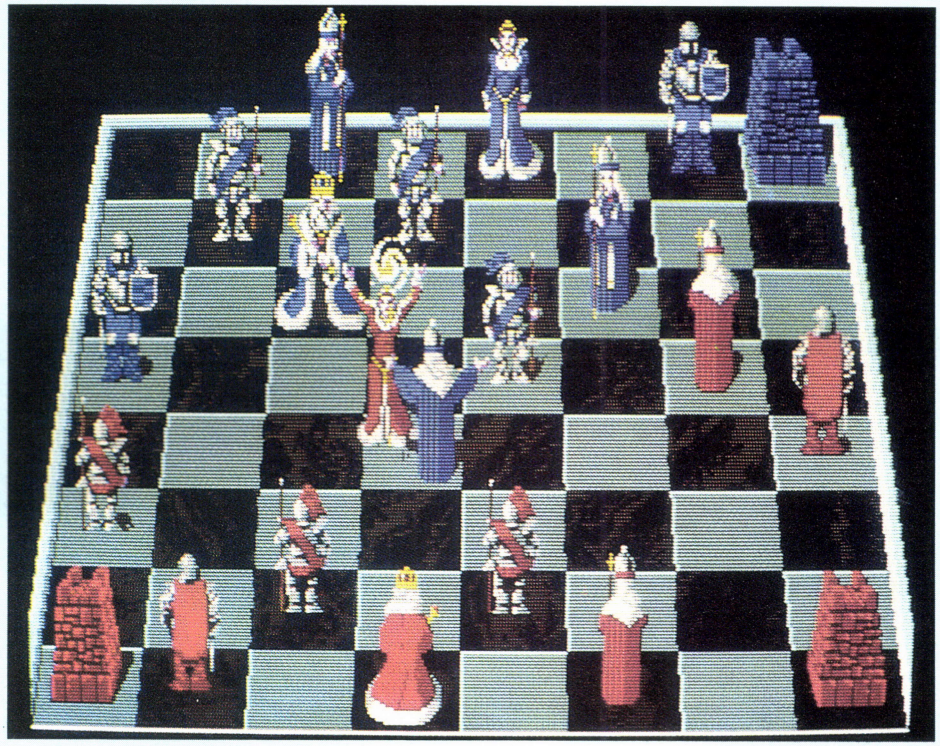
*Sargon IV* has 16 levels of play, including a special novice setting for new or low-skilled chess players. Help (in the form of hints) and tutorials are online for easy access, and the chess clock for timed tournament is on-screen unless the player turns off the option.

Moves are entered with mouse or keyboard control. *Sargon IV* has a library of 150,000 moves and will analyze chess problems and games, give hints, change sides or act as referee. In addition, there are over 100 historical chess games online to study or replay, and *Sargon IV* will analyze each move as it's en-

tered. A note-taking option even lets the player make his own annotations.

*Sargon IV* has all of the player conveniences and enhancements customary to big-name programs. Chess players can take back moves, change sides or rotate the board. Games can be saved and/or printed. Among the many player skill options are time-based levels, which control the time *Sargon IV* thinks for each move; countdown levels to limit the time of a game; and fixed-depth levels that restrict how deeply *Sargon IV* thinks about a move. An easy-play option weakens *Sargon IV* at every skill level by blocking the robot opponent from thinking during the time the human player makes moves.

The graphics are outstanding. The Macintosh offers both color and black-and-white modes, and the IBM PC version supports EGA and VGA. The standard overhead, two-dimensional view of the contest contrasts with an alternate three-dimensional view that takes every advantage of the computer's graphic capability. Several designer chess sets are included on disk from which the player can choose. Better still, the Macintosh version has a piece sculptor to make customized sets. This special function provides the gamer with plain chess pieces to be altered or completely redrawn, bit-map fashion. Invert and color-change options wed with the cut-and-paste functions to make it easy to complete all the needed pieces. This is an extremely attractive feature that adds still more depth to a great chess program.



**Battle Chess**

## *Chessmaster*'s Latest Triumph

*Chessmaster 2100* (Software Toolworks for Amiga, Apple II, Apple IIGS, Commodore 64 and IBM PC) is the successor to *Chessmaster 2000*, a program that took the chess world by storm when it was released. The new edition beefs up the earlier version with still more player helps, even nicer graphics and more levels of play.

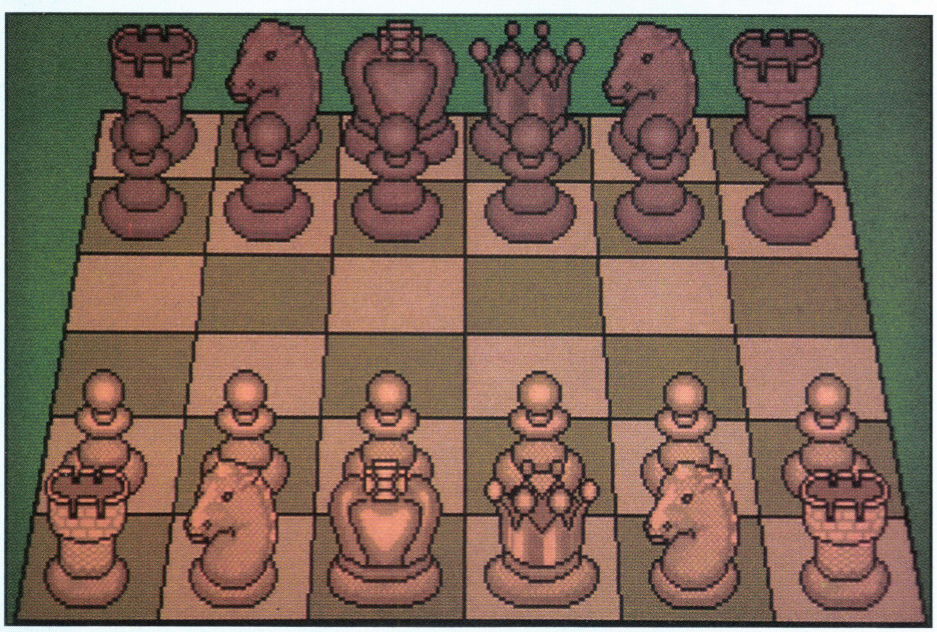
*Chessmaster 2100*'s extended levels range from newcomer to grandmaster, so that the gamer can now select the time per move, time per game, moves per minute, minutes per game or tournament time controls. Regardless of the level selected, the player can toggle on an easier mode. A special teaching mode displays all legal moves and spotlights all pieces threatened by capture. Hints and tutorials are online, along with an opening-move library of over 150,000 positions. A classic games library is also online for replay or analysis, and the *Chessmaster* will also set up special chess problems or solve any situations keyed in by the computerist.

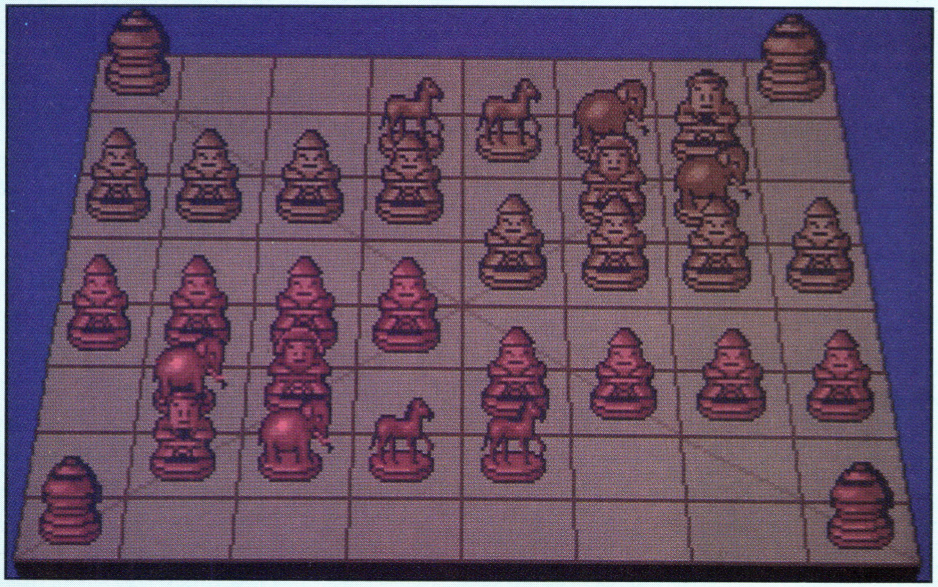
All standard player options are included in this state-of-the-art program. The chess player can take back or replay moves, change sides at any time, save or print games, replay a game with *Chessmaster*'s instant analysis or have the computer play both sides. The gamer can also rotate the board in 90° steps to see the pieces from every side.

The graphics are splendid, with three different board views available. The two-dimensional overhead view features well-articulated drawings of the chess pieces instead of the standard flat view. The three-dimensional board is tilted at an angle that keeps each piece fully visible. A third screen, called the war room, displays the board, move list, all captured pieces, the chess clocks and the thinking window simultaneously. The IBM PC version supports CGA, Hercules, EGA and VGA graphics, and the Macintosh version uses every Mac convenience available, including pull-down menus and hint boxes.

Moves can be entered by keyboard using standard chess notations or by joystick, mouse or keyboard control of the on-screen cursor using click-and-drag technology. When the chessmaster makes his moves, the chess

**Distant Armies**





**Distant Armies**

pieces take a picturesque slide from the starting square to their destination, unless the piece-slide option is in the off position; this time-saving option just pops pieces into their new spots. Beginners can get a full explanation of illegal moves and suggestions about how to improve their game.

Special features add sparkle to this already outstanding chess program. *Chessmaster 2100* now speaks; built-in voice capability lets it announce moves. The robot player barks out "Gotcha" each time it captures a man and acknowledges its loss each time the player takes one of its pieces. The special sound function has four settings: silent play, a single bell tone for each move, musical cues to signal every situation or voice announcements of all interesting events.

Artistic pawn-pushers can create their own pieces *if* they have Electronic Arts *Deluxe Paint II*. There is no actual piece-molding electronic factory on board, but the manual contains complete instructions for creating a new chess set and transferring it to the program. This is not quite as convenient as the *Sargon IV* piece maker. However, working with the art program permits the chess-artist to actually draw (or paint) the pieces, rather than using the bit-map feature, so the results might be even more impressive, if more difficult to attain.

*Chessmaster 2100* is an unbelievably good chess program, and the robot opponent provides a tough game: It's rated 2325 (master level) by the U.S. Chess Federation. *Chessmaster* has been sculpted and refined at both ends of the player-skill spectrum. The current program is much stronger, with many more player options than its predecessor. However, perhaps even more important for most players, it is also easier. Not only the highest levels have grown stronger, but the novice level has been made simpler to master.

## *Colossus* of the Continent

*Colossus Chess X* was written in Europe by Martin Bryant and is scheduled for publication this year in America by Artworx (Amiga, Atari ST and IBM PC). This is the tenth edition of a program that's dominated European computer-chess groups for years, much as *Sargon* once ruled America. Earlier versions of the program which found their way to the U.S. were attractive and competitive with all but the very top American chess games. This latest incarnation of the Continental Champion brings *Colossus Chess* much nearer to state of the art.

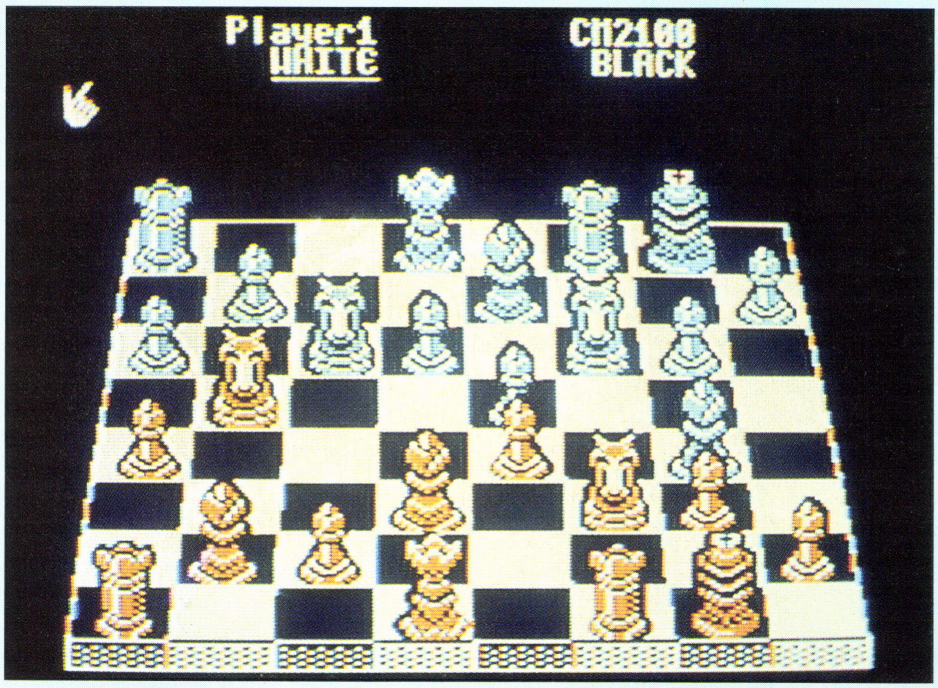
Like the American pair of super programs, *Colossus* understands all the rules of chess and offers a large slate of player options, including a few not found on any other program. One of these is languages. The player chooses to communicate with *Colossus* in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish, then receives all messages in that jargon.

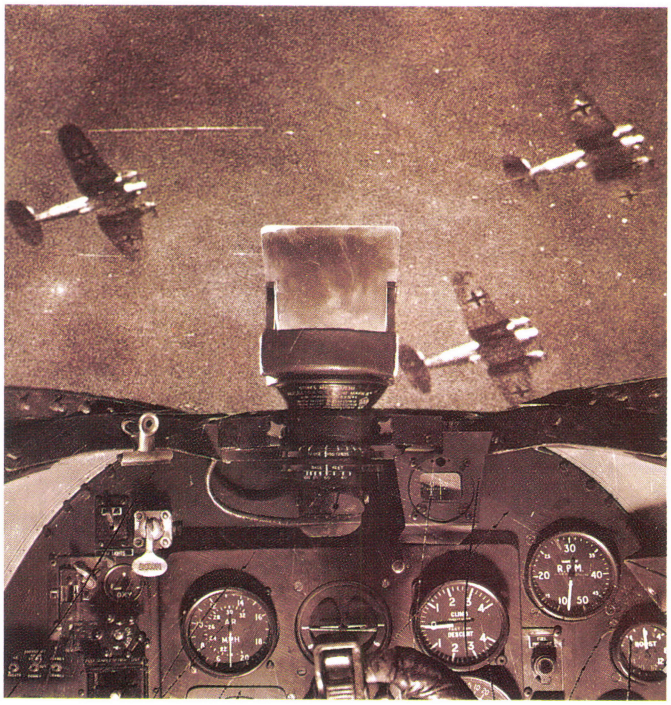
*Colossus* is controlled by mouse, arrow keys or keyboard-entered algebraic notation. The on-screen pointer is shaped like a hand, the color of which changes to indicate the player's turn. Options are chosen from pull-down menus. *Colossus* plays at several skill levels and, depending on the amount of thinking time the robot chess player is permitted, directs both sides of a game or supervises a contest between two humans. The program also solves chess problems, self-mates and help mates. It contains an opening book of over 11,000 records, as well as a library of classic chess games and problems.

The graphics may not be quite up to the level of *Sargon IV* or *Chessmaster 2100*, but they are nonetheless quite respectable. An information screen presents all the past moves, player name(s), chess clocks and an explanation of *Colossus'* thought processes. The main screen features an angled 3-D board that can be reoriented for viewing from any vantage. Four chess sets are on disk: the Standard Staunton set, Futuristica (robots and ray guns), Medieval (knights in armor) and Oriental (shoguns and geishas).

The most interesting feature in *Colossus*

**Chessmaster 2100**







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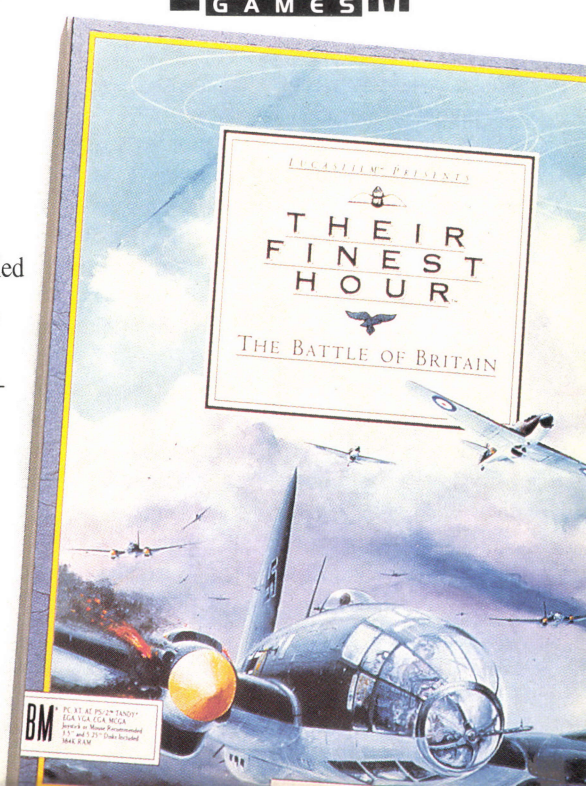
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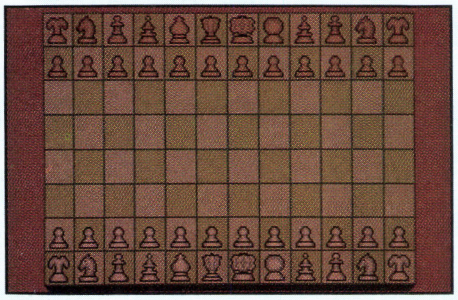
LUCASFILM™ GAMES




IBM screens shown. Available for IBM (includes AdLib™ sound card support), Amiga, and Atari ST.

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**Distant Armies**

*Chess X* is its ability to learn new lines of play. As *Colossus* plays more games, its memory absorbs the new situations so the robot player actually becomes tougher to beat.

*Colossus Chess X* is unfinished at the time of this writing, so it is hard to know what impact it will have on American computer chess. It seems unlikely to match the two master programs previously discussed, but it does offer a lot for its price.

## *Distant Armies* of Chess Players

Eagle Tree Software's *Distant Armies, a Playing History of Chess* (Amiga, IBM PC under development) took its inspiration from H.J.R. Murray's 1913 book, *A History of Chess*. Like that early text, the program is a remembrance of the evolution of chess. Many variations have come and gone in the past, before the contest stabilized to its current state.

*Distant Armies* contains computer versions of ten of these antiques. Each includes a history of the variant, its rules and moves and a help feature. Every game has its own board and pieces, and these can be recolored to suit your taste. All except the Chinese game have two views, a 2-D and a 3-D image. (The Chinese game has no 3-D view because of the complexity of the symbols on the pieces.) The sound variations permit tones for each event or computer narration by voice.

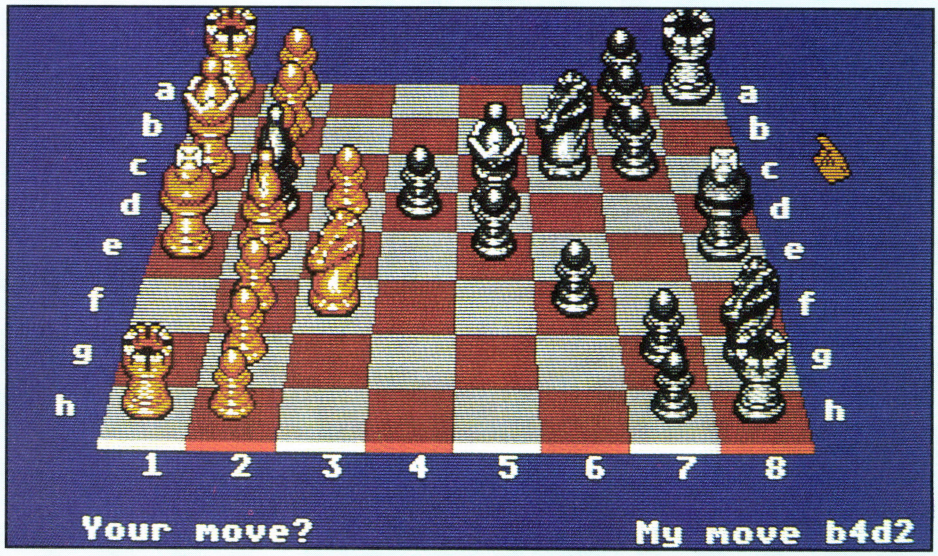
Like most computer chess programs, the robot player will monitor two humans, play against itself or play against the computerist. The player can switch sides, set the difficulty level and get hints. The computer will also indicate any pieces in danger and show all legal moves. Games can be saved or printed out in algebraic notation.

The ten games are:Chaturanga, played in India in the seventh century; Burmese Chess, a variant of the Indian game; Chinese Chess, played on a 9×10 board that is divided by a river; Shatranj, Islamic chess which uses no images of living things; Byzantine Chess, played on a round board; Medieval Chess, a modernization of Islamic chess; Courier, German chess played on a 12×8 board; Turkish Chess, another variant on Islamic style; Decimal Chess, played on a 10×10 board; and Los Alamos Chess (one of the first computerized chess programs), played on a 6×6 board that contains all the modern pieces except for the bishops.

*Distant Armies* definitely should not replace one of the mainstream chess programs in any gamer's library. But it is an extremely interesting collection of chess variants with a lot of built-in history. Anyone who loves the classic game should find these distant kin to be as interesting as kissing cousins once you get to know them.

## The Mystical Armies of *Battle Chess*

Interplay Production's *Battle Chess* is an innovative entertainment for chess enthusiasts. Brian Fargo's award-winning game takes chess backward over a thousand years to turn the cerebral contest into an action display in which the conflicts are not imaginary at all. Instead, when knight meets pawn, when queen faces bishop, when each piece comes into contact with any other, the battle turns into a realistic conflict that leaves only one survivor on-screen.




**Colossus Chess X**

*Battle Chess* plays exactly like regular chess. When the player points an on-screen cursor at a piece and clicks the mouse, the square it occupies turns color. The piece then moves to the square indicated by the pointing cursor. This produces a delightful animation of that piece traveling to the indicated position. Each exhibits great individuality: knights swagger and strut, the queen swishes and every other piece has a characteristic style of movement.

When a piece is moved to an already occupied square, the scene switches away from the familiar board of squares to a battlefield. Here, an animated skirmish takes place. The gamer has no control over this contest; the outcome of the battle depends on the strength of the piece (as per the regular rules of chess). However, the face-offs between the battling chess pieces are intriguing and picturesque. This is a real showboat of a computer product and should really amaze your noncomputing friends.

As a modern chess program, *Battle Chess* has many player options, including nine skill levels for the robot opponent. One of its unique features is a modem option, so two computerists can play via telecommunication hookups. But the real appeal here is *not* the strength of the algorithms or rating of the computer opponent. This visual treat adds an entirely new dimension to a classic contest by depicting the battles between the warring armies.

This year, chess players have the finest chess programs ever devised available to them. Although the ones discussed here range widely in style and graphic treatments, they all offer a great deal of entertainment. And each is, in its own way, the best chess competition that money can buy.

**Companies mentioned in this article:**

**Artworx, 1844 Penfield Road, Penfield, NY 14526; (800) 828-6573.**

**Eagle Tree Software, P. O. Box 164, Hopewell, VA 23860; (804) 452-0623.**

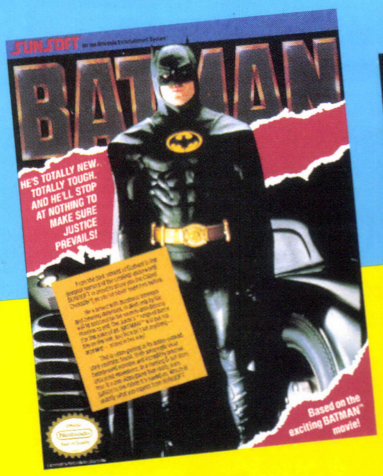
**Interplay Productions, 1575 Corporate Drive, Costa Mesa, CA 92626; (714) 549-2241.**

**Software Toolworks, 13557 Ventura Blvd., Sherman Oaks, CA 91423; (818) 907-6789.**

**Spinnaker, One Kendall Square, Cambridge, MA 02139; (800) 826-0706.**

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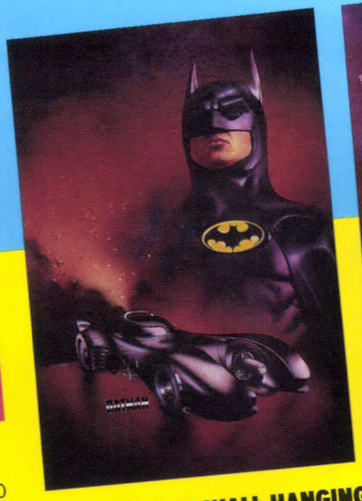
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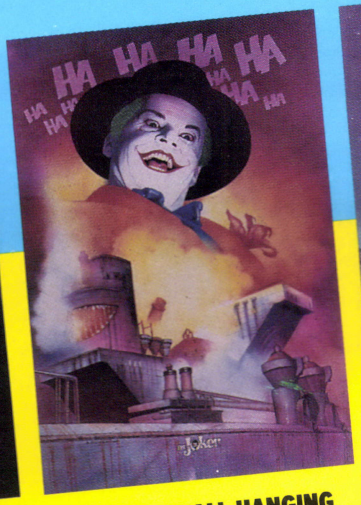
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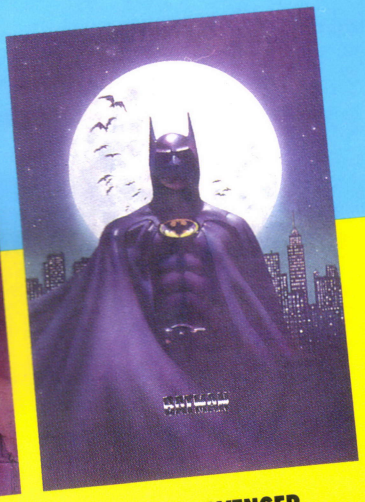
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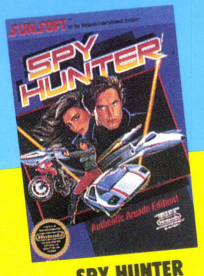


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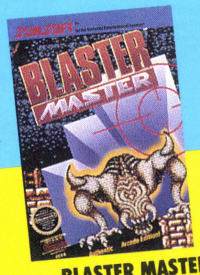
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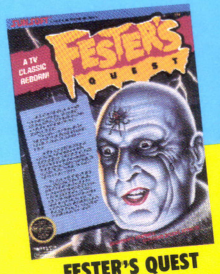
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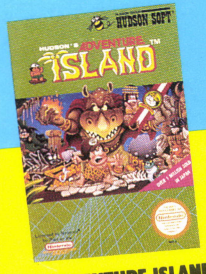
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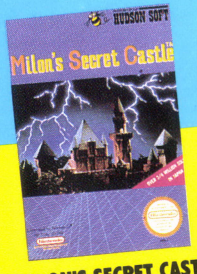
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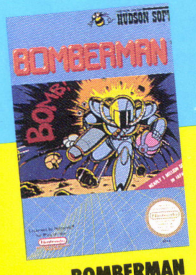
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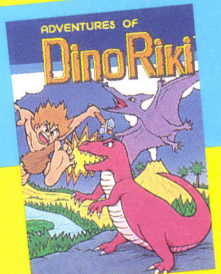
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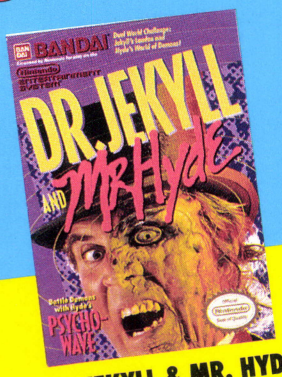
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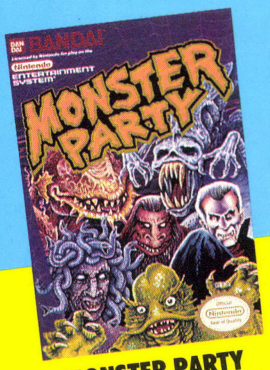
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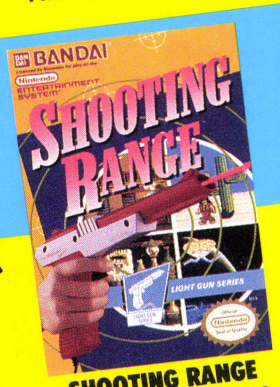



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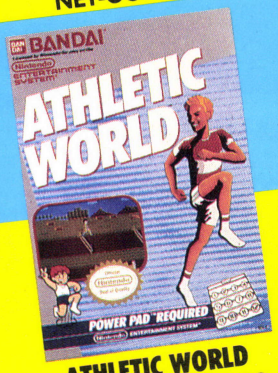



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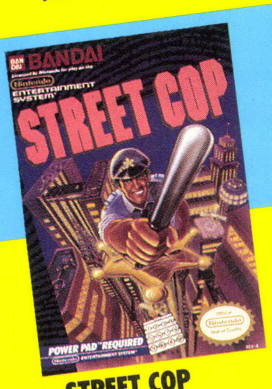
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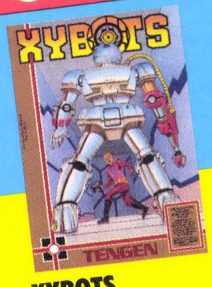



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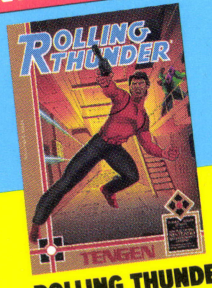



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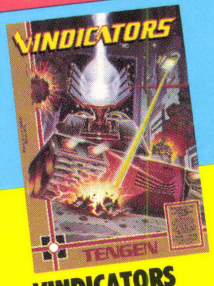

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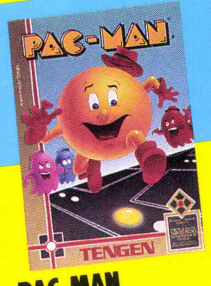

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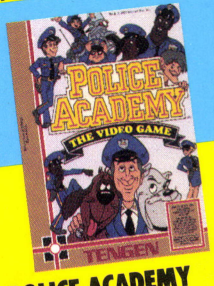

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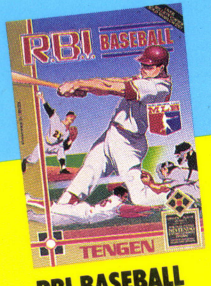

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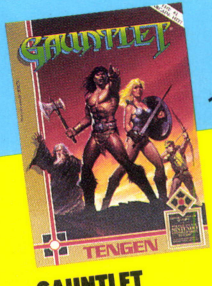

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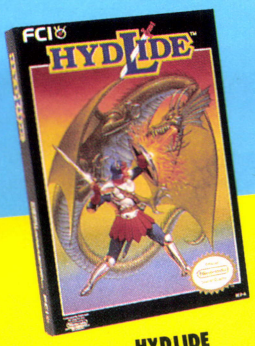



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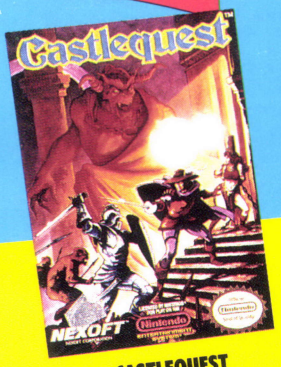
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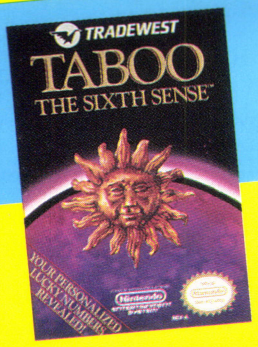



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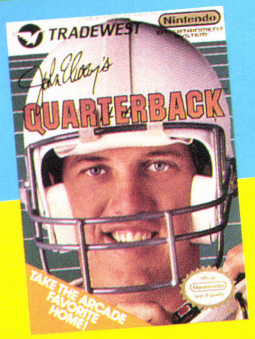



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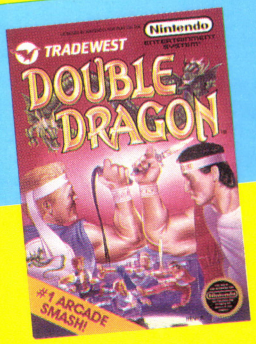
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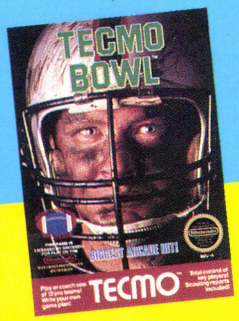



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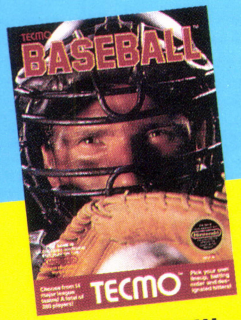
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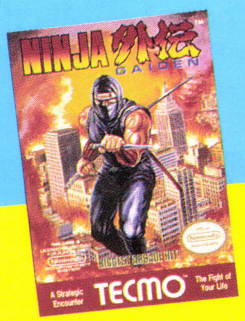
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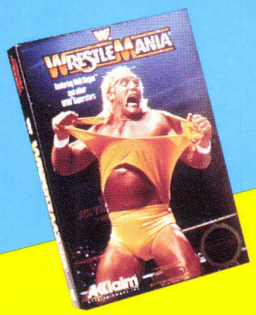
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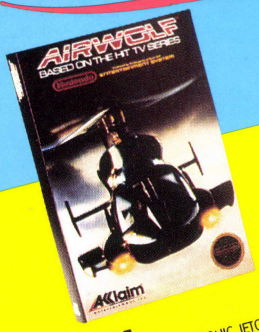
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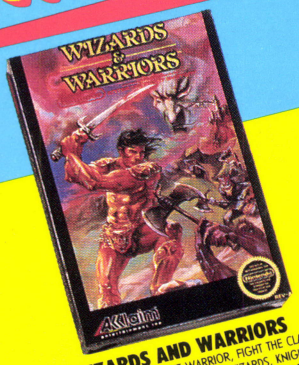
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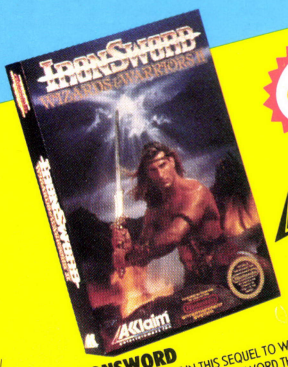

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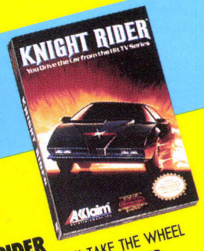


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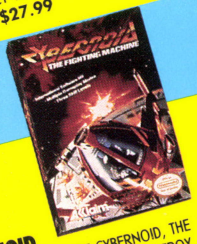

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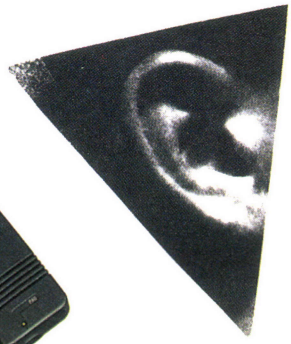
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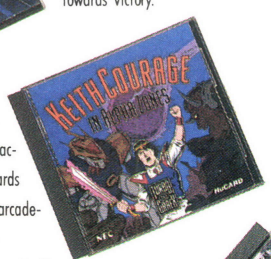
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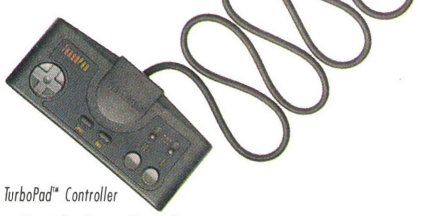



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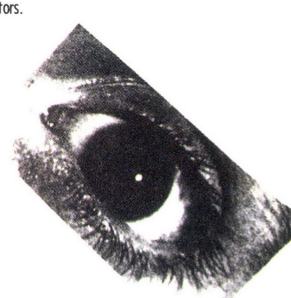
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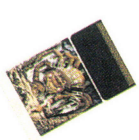

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# A Player's Guide to: MegaMan 2, Part I

by Clayton Walnum

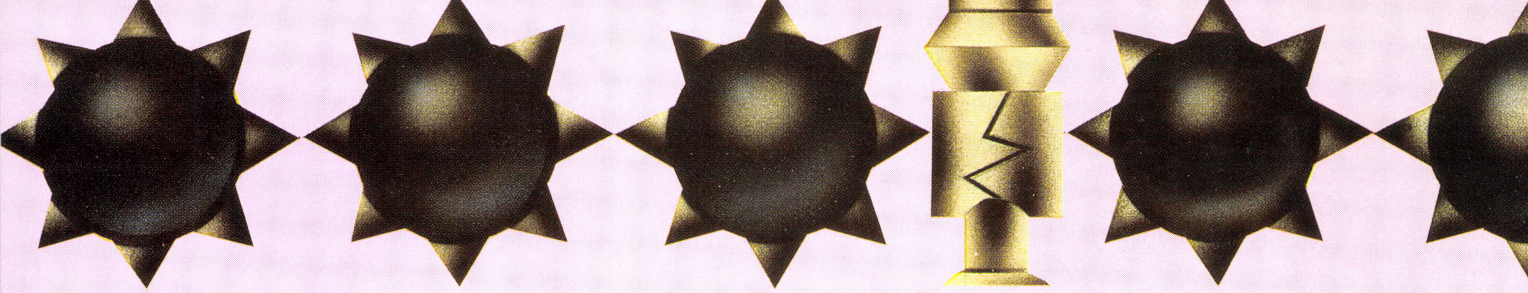




The original *MegaMan* has been a long-running hit on the Nintendo. As a matter of fact, it's still one of the top-selling games. It's no surprise then that *MegaMan 2* should also jump quickly to the top of the best-seller list, what with every fan of the original eager to begin a new adventure. But can *MegaMan 2* live up to its predecessor's reputation? Or does this new entry fall prey to sequelitis?

*MegaMan* lovers relax! I'm happy to report that although *MegaMan 2* isn't quite as extravagant as the original, it's an excellent addition to your gamer's library.

In the following article and maps, we'll give you a complete look at the first levels of *MegaMan 2* and provide you with tips to help you past difficult areas in the game. For that reason, if you already own *MegaMan 2*, we suggest you put off reading this article until you've had a chance to play. If you read on, many surprises may be spoiled for you. However, you may, if you haven't yet purchased the game, feel free to use this article as an extended review to help you decide whether *MegaMan 2* interests you.



# The Strange Case of Dr. Wily: A Player's Guide to MegaMan 2, Part 1

### In the Beginning

*MegaMan 2* is actually divided into two parts. This article will cover only the first six levels of the game, with the rest of the game being presented next month.

In this month's portion of the game, you must defeat six of Dr. Wily's cohorts: Clash Man, Heat Man, Metal Man, Air Man, Flash Man and Bubble Man. Each of these "bosses" has his own level, and you may choose to defeat them in any order you like. Keep in mind, though, that whenever you defeat one of the bosses, you gain control of his weapon. These weapons may be used in other levels, many of them giving you an advantage in certain situations. Therefore, it's wise to complete some levels before others.

Also, there are three devices that will be awarded to you, one each for beating Heat Man, Air Man and Flash Man. These devices—the levitation platform, the jet sled and the elevator—will come in handy on some of the other levels. Without them, there are many prizes you won't be able to get, and, depending on your skill, perhaps even areas you won't be able to navigate. Even though you may defeat the bosses in any order you like, it's best to discover which weapons and items will serve you best at which levels.

### Keep Up Your Strength!

When you defeat an enemy, he sometimes will drop a life-energy capsule, a weapon-energy capsule or a 1-Up. Except for the 1-Up, you'll find that you'll get many more energy capsules than you need. For this reason, there's no excuse for losing a life by running out of energy. When your energy is low, find a place with many easy-to-beat creatures and blast away, scooping up the energy capsules as they appear. There are few places in *MegaMan 2* where you will have trouble getting energy when you need it.

The same holds true for your weapons. All of the special weapons (the ones you receive by beating bosses) will eat up energy as you use them. Keep your weapons fully charged and ready to use. When a particular weapon starts running down, switch to your regular weapon and do some fighting. You'll find that the weapon-energy capsules are plentiful, indeed.

If you keep an eye on your energy levels, about the only way you can lose a life is by falling off a platform or touching something deadly like energy beams or mines. So stay aware of your status!

### The "E" Capsules

In various places throughout the levels that make up the first half of the game, you'll come across "E" capsules. These capsules are hidden throughout the game and, unlike the normal energy capsules, are never dropped by a defeated enemy. While the normal life-energy capsules, which come in a large and small form, will fill up your life energy only a limited amount, an "E" capsule will fill it to the maximum.

The best thing about the "E" capsules is you don't have to use them right away like the other capsules. You can save them until you really need them. They're great to have when you're in a location in which the regular energy capsules are unavailable (for example, when fighting one of the bosses).

However, because these capsules are so handy, you'll be tempted to overuse them. Then, when you really need one, they'll be gone. Let me tell you a little secret: With a little practice, you can beat every creature and boss in the first half of the game without resorting to the use of the "E" capsules. Dr. Wily's fortress is where the "E" capsules will serve you best, so save up as many of them as you can. You'll be glad you did.

### Know Thy Enemy

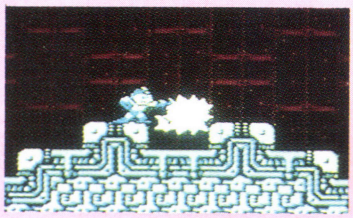
Most of the creatures in *MegaMan 2* are easy to defeat (at least, that's true in the first half of the game; Dr. Wily's fortress, on the other hand, has some particularly nasty foes lying in wait for you). They are the most dangerous when you're jumping between platforms. Frequently, that's when they'll attack, causing you to fall from the platform and lose a life.

A few of the creatures—Atomic Chicken, Hot Dog, Lantern Fish and Lightning Lord, for example—present more of a challenge. Hints for defeating those creatures can be found on the following maps, in the locations where they appear in the game. But remember: First try to defeat them on your own. That's part of the fun.

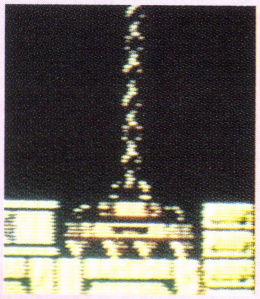
### Simple But Addicting

There's not much else to say about the first levels of *MegaMan 2* (except, of course, what's marked on the maps that follow). It's a simple game, requiring few tricks. With a couple of exceptions, most of the scenes in the first half of the game are straight arcade action. The real puzzles and challenges begin when you've defeated the eight bosses and are ready to take on Dr. Wily's fortress.

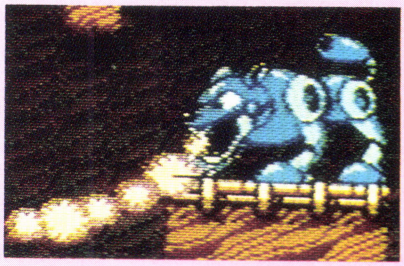
But we'll talk about that next month.



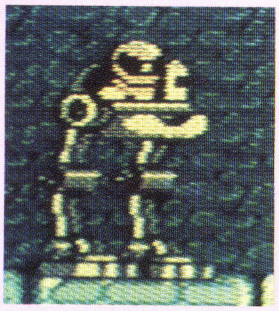
Most of the bosses are not too difficult to defeat.



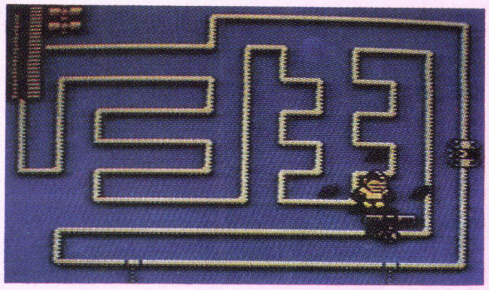
Don't get caught under a metal muncher!



Hot Dog's flaming breath is deadly.



After you destroy the walker, you must defeat its driver too.



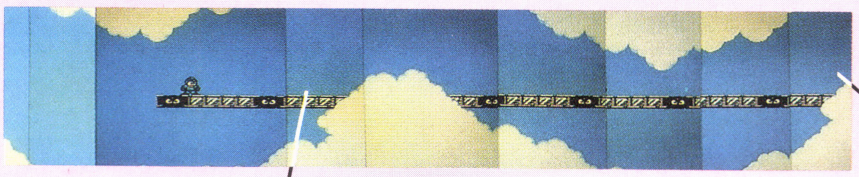
This long and winding path is the only way to the ladder. Don't let the spinning spools knock you down.

The air tikis may seem like tough adversaries until you learn the trick. Wait until their horns go down, then run across their heads and jump onto the floating platform. As soon as you land on the platform, turn and shoot the gremlins that will usually appear. If you don't shoot the gremlins right away, they will knock you off the platform.



## AIR MAN 1

Here you'll find the lightning lords riding on their air chariots. You must shoot the lightning lord then hop onto the chariot. It will bring you part way toward the platform on the far right of this strip. But because the chariots travel in circles, you have to wait for another one to appear, defeat the lightning lord that's on it and then jump over to the new chariot. Some of the jumps require fast reflexes and careful timing.



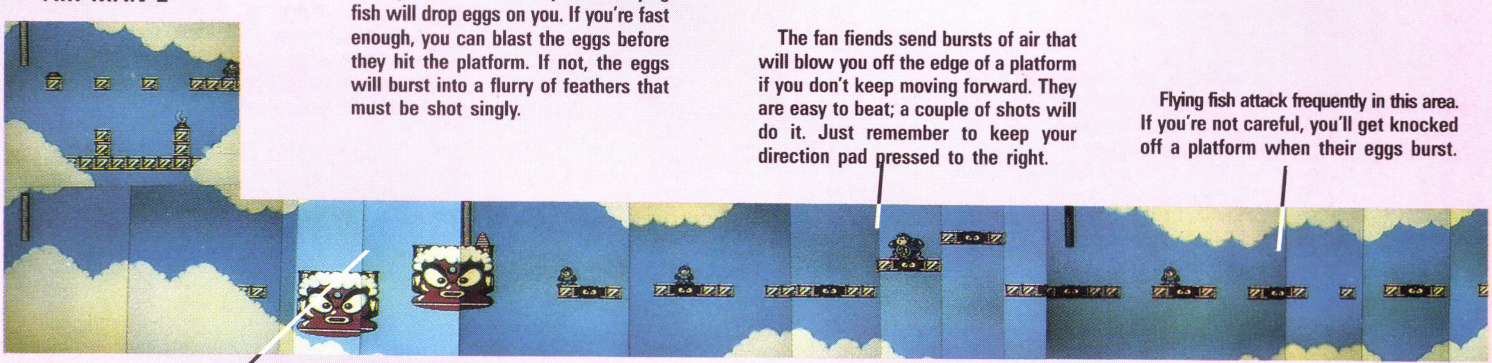
Here you'll drop down to the next strip.

## AIR MAN 2

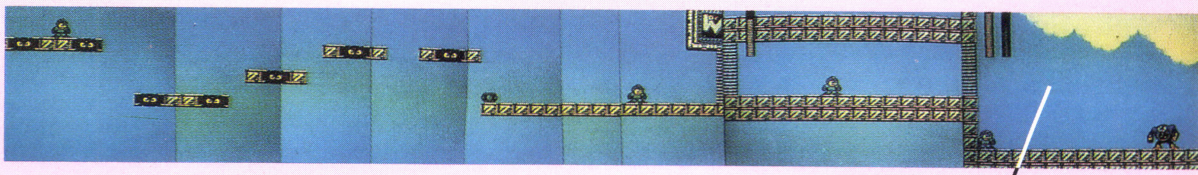
As you run across this platform, flying fish will drop eggs on you. If you're fast enough, you can blast the eggs before they hit the platform. If not, the eggs will burst into a flurry of feathers that must be shot singly.

The fan fiends send bursts of air that will blow you off the edge of a platform if you don't keep moving forward. They are easy to beat; a couple of shots will do it. Just remember to keep your direction pad pressed to the right.

Flying fish attack frequently in this area. If you're not careful, you'll get knocked off a platform when their eggs burst.

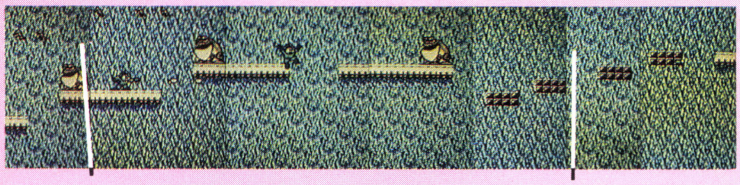


These air tikis are much harder to traverse than the first ones, due to the gremlins that attack in packs. You must keep shooting the gremlins as fast as you can while you wait for the tiki's horns to go down. If you don't take your time and plan your jump, you'll almost certainly fall from the edge of a tiki and plummet to your death.



Air Man, this level's goal, is easy to beat. Get as close to him as you can by jumping over his "tornados," and blast him whenever he stops firing. This guy's a wimp!

## BUBBLE MAN 1

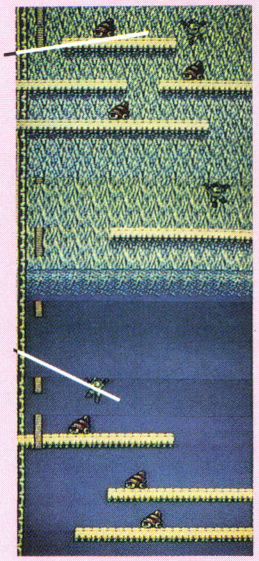


The croakers aren't very tough, either, but the longer you wait to blast them, the more of their leaping "offspring" you're going to have to deal with.

If you want to get across these platforms, you mustn't stop or slow down for even a split second. As soon as your feet hit the platform, jump to the next. If you hesitate, the platform will drop out from beneath you.

## BUBBLE MAN 2

The crabbots present no real problem. You might, however, land on top of them when you fall from above. Steer your fall so you miss them.

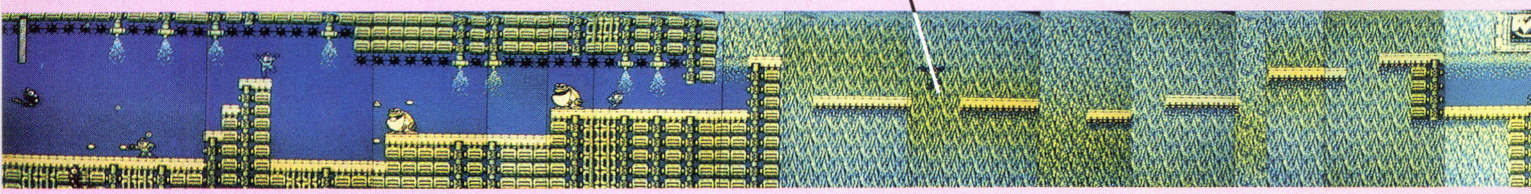


An interesting fact about the crabbots: If you blast them with certain weapons, their shells will fly off before they are destroyed. Experiment and see what happens.

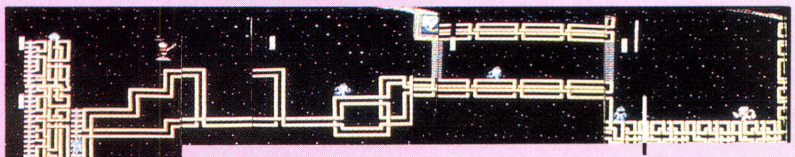


Jump carefully here. The enemy will quickly drop from above—and always at the worst time. It's easy to fall off the platforms.

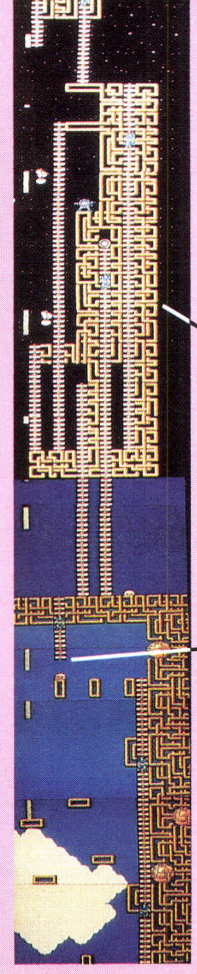
## BUBBLE MAN 4



## CRASH MAN 2

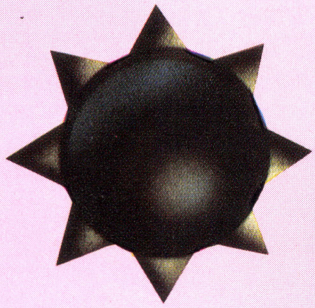


Crash Man likes to follow your every move. When he throws his bomb, jump over it. When you jump, he will too. Blast him while you're both in the air. It'll take a little while to get the rhythm right, but once you have it, you'll hardly ever get hit and will easily defeat Crash Man with even the weakest weapon.



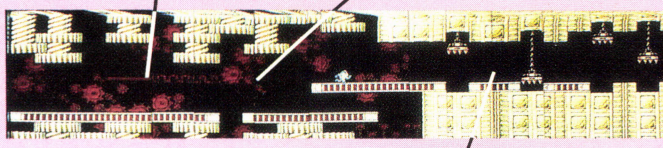
Because of the attacking flying fish, it's easy to get knocked off these ladders. As you climb, make sure you keep the arrow pad pressed upward. Then if you should fall, you'll grab the ladder again almost immediately.

Shooting at this hard hat from the top of the ladder will do you no good. You must jump to the center platform to wake him up, then quickly jump back to the top of the ladder before he can knock you down. Once he gets closer, wait for his hat to go up, then blast him.



Pay close attention to the direction the conveyor belts are moving. If you fall off, you'll lose a life.

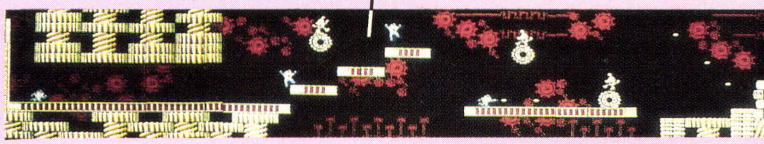
When walking the opposite way on moving conveyer belts, jumping forward will help you progress more quickly.



## METAL MAN 1

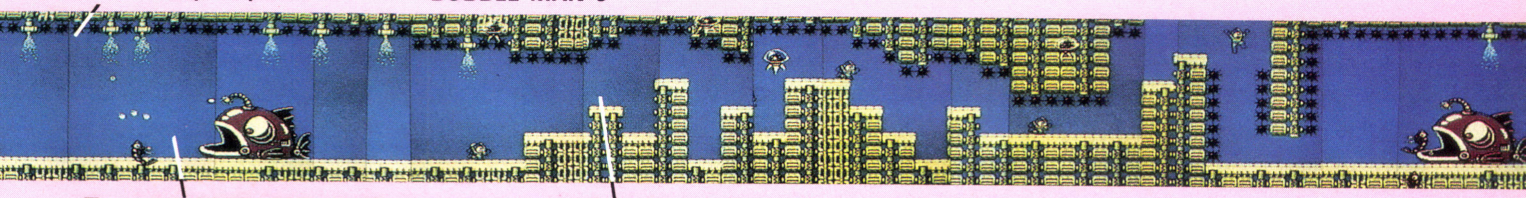
The metal munchers can cause serious damage when they fall. You'll have to sneak past them quickly while they're in their upright position. Unfortunately, the many moving conveyor belts make it tough to stay out of harm's way.

Watch out for the gear clowns. They'll roll you down if you don't blast them first.



The mines that line the roof of this section will put a quick stop to your game if you touch them. Avoid them at all costs—not always easy to do.

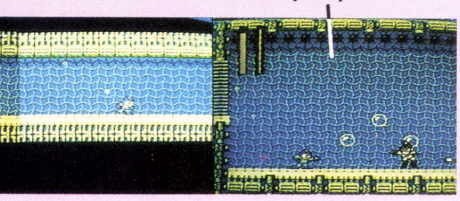
## BUBBLE MAN 3



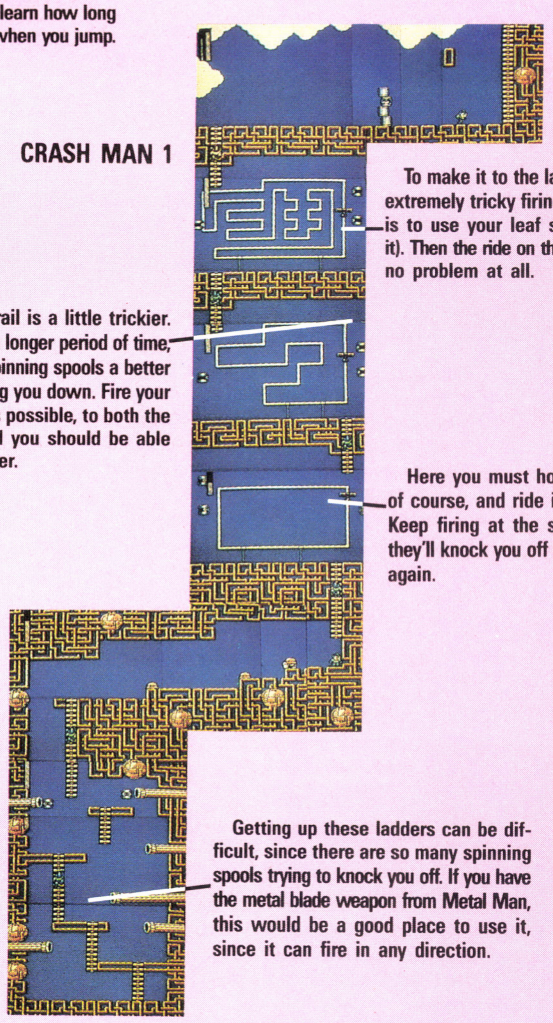
The secret to defeating the lantern fish can be found in its name. Give up? The only place he's vulnerable is the small light on top of his head. You need to hit that tiny target five or six times while at the same time battling the shrimp that keep coming from his mouth.

Getting through this section can be tricky. You must not jump too high or you'll hit the mines on the roof. There's no trick here; you have to learn how long to hold down the button when you jump.

Here's Bubble Man. To beat him, jump above his bubbles, and shoot him in the "air." (Actually, you're in water, which gives this battle a slow-motion feel.) Bubble Man is fairly easy to beat.



## CRASH MAN 1

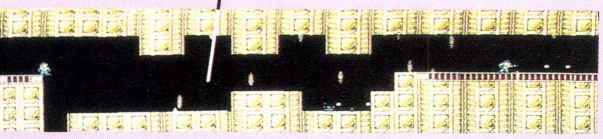


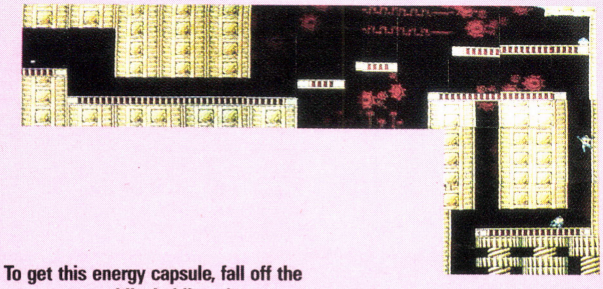
To make it to the ladder here requires extremely tricky firing. The easiest way is to use your leaf shield (if you have it). Then the ride on the platform presents no problem at all.

This platform trail is a little trickier. You must ride for a longer period of time, which gives the spinning spools a better chance of knocking you down. Fire your weapon as fast as possible, to both the right and left, and you should be able to reach the ladder.

Here you must hop on the platform, of course, and ride it up to the ladder. Keep firing at the spinning spools, or they'll knock you off and make you start again.

If you lost a lot of life to the metal munchers, here's a good place to charge up. An infinite number of screws burrow their way through the floor and ceiling. Just stand back and blast them, scooping up energy capsules when they appear. If you're really lucky, you may get a free life as well.



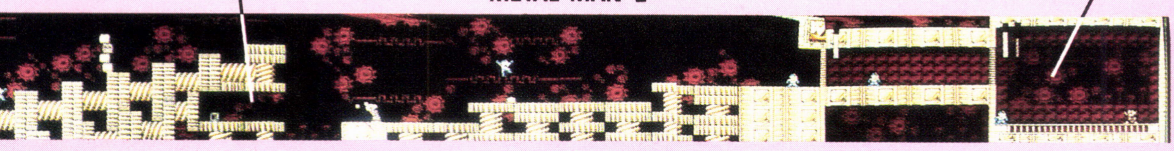


Getting up these ladders can be difficult, since there are so many spinning spools trying to knock you off. If you have the metal blade weapon from Metal Man, this would be a good place to use it, since it can fire in any direction.

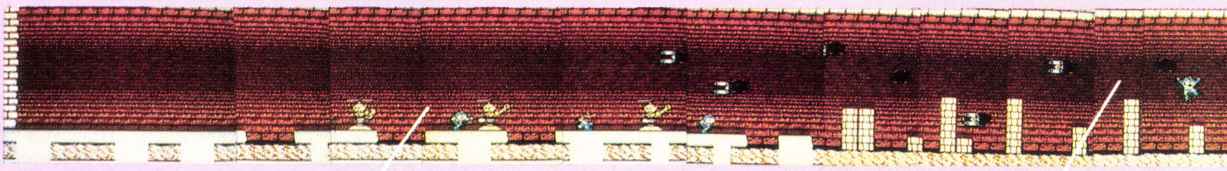
To get this energy capsule, fall off the gears on top while holding the arrow pad to the left. As you fall past the opening, you'll curve in just enough to land on the ledge. Of course, then you need to make it across the wide gap. You'll probably need the jet sled.

## METAL MAN 2

Metal Man's wild leaping about makes him a difficult target. Stay as close to him as possible, jump over his metal blades and fire as fast as you can. It may take a little practice, but you can beat him.



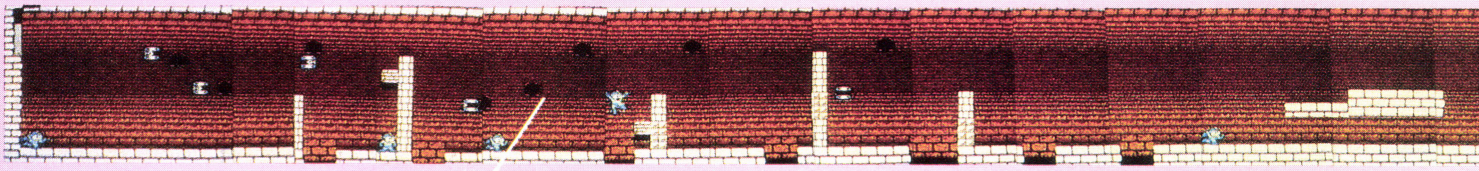
## HEAT MAN 1



Run and jump through this area non-stop, firing as you go, and the prop-tops will give you no trouble.

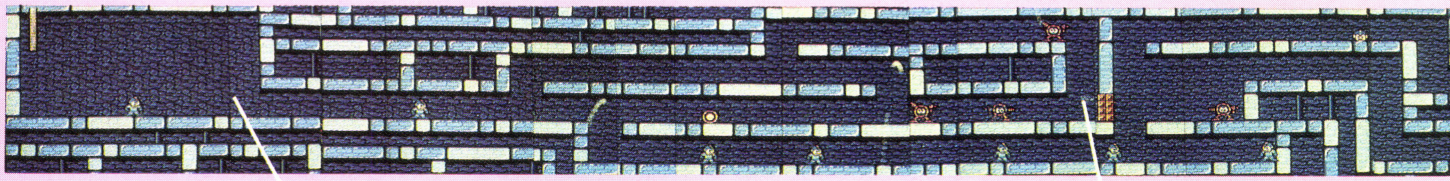
How are your jumping skills? You're going to need them to get past this lava flow. The lava means instant death—unless you're still blinking after taking a hit from one of the spinning spools. Then you're invincible for a short time.

## HEAT MAN 2



Getting over these walls requires careful timing. You must jump into the air so that a block materializes beneath you. The appearance and disappearance of the blocks follows a definite pattern. Once you learn that pattern, most of these obstacles will be easy to overcome. Also note that some of the walls can be blasted open with crash bombs.

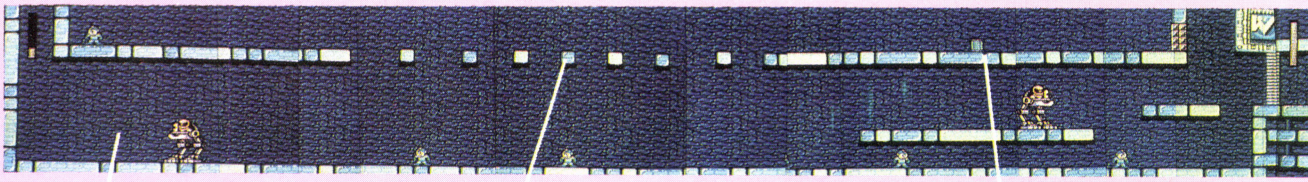
## FLASH MAN 1



The ice floors of this maze will have you slipping and sliding. You'll need to have good control to keep from sliding into enemies.

The hardest thing about this level is finding the quickest way to the exit. Some of the walls can be blasted with crash bombs, providing you with a more direct route to your destination.

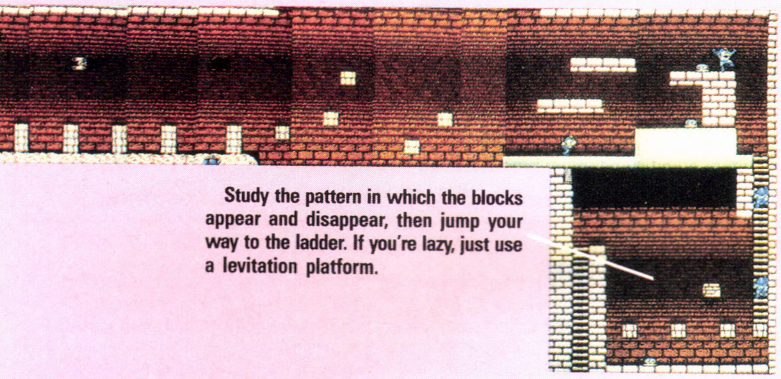
## FLASH MAN 3



Keep in mind that bubble lead is particularly effective against the walkers.

If you're a skillful jumper, you might be able to stay high above the walkers. But because the ice blocks are slippery, it's tough to retain your footing.

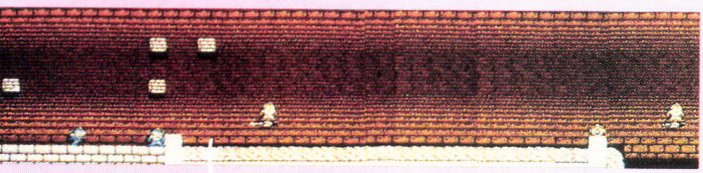
Gather up as many energy capsules as you can, and try not to use them in the early rounds of the game. They will be especially handy when you attempt to take on Dr. Wily's spooky fortress.



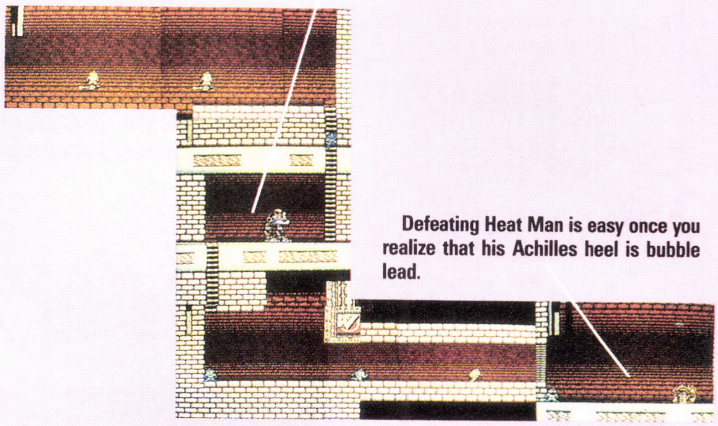
Study the pattern in which the blocks appear and disappear, then jump your way to the ladder. If you're lazy, just use a levitation platform.

Once you get this far, you're close to your battle with Heat Man. Unfortunately, this walker can do some serious damage to you if you're not careful. Whatever you do, don't let him stomp on you. Fire on him from a distance, using bubble lead.

## HEAT MAN 3

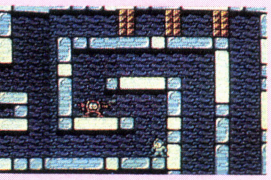


Using the appearing and vanishing blocks here to get you across the lava is extremely difficult. Your best bet is the jet sled.

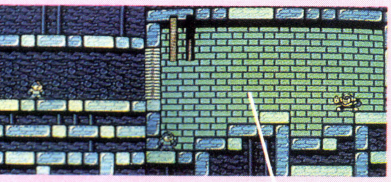


Defeating Heat Man is easy once you realize that his Achilles heel is bubble lead.

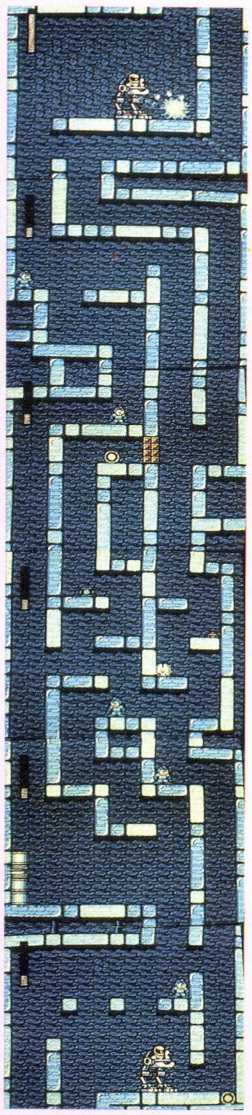
## FLASH MAN 2



The safest passage down is the one on the right, but you can't go that way unless you have a supply of crash bombs to blow out the walls blocking your way.



Flash Man is easy to defeat. Stay close to him and fire as fast as you can. Chances are good that you'll beat him with your first attempt.





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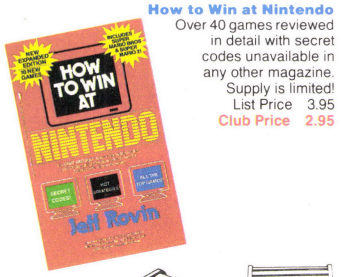
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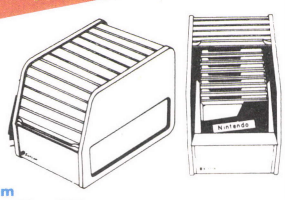
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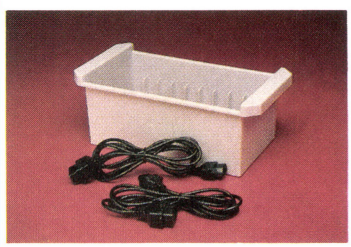


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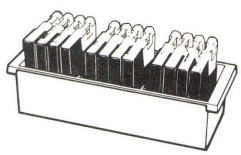
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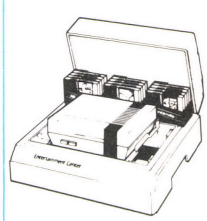


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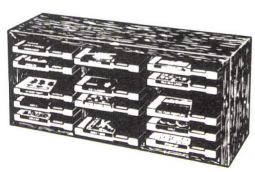
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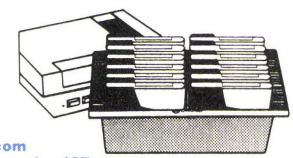
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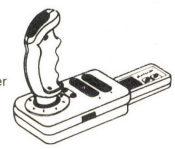


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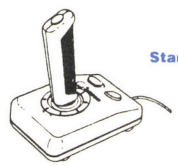


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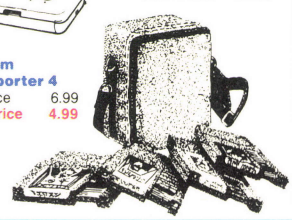
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(see list next page for more Beeshu joysticks)



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| ☐ Bandai Hyperstick | 39.99 | 32.99 |
| ☐ Bandai Mega Controller | 59.99 | 49.99 |
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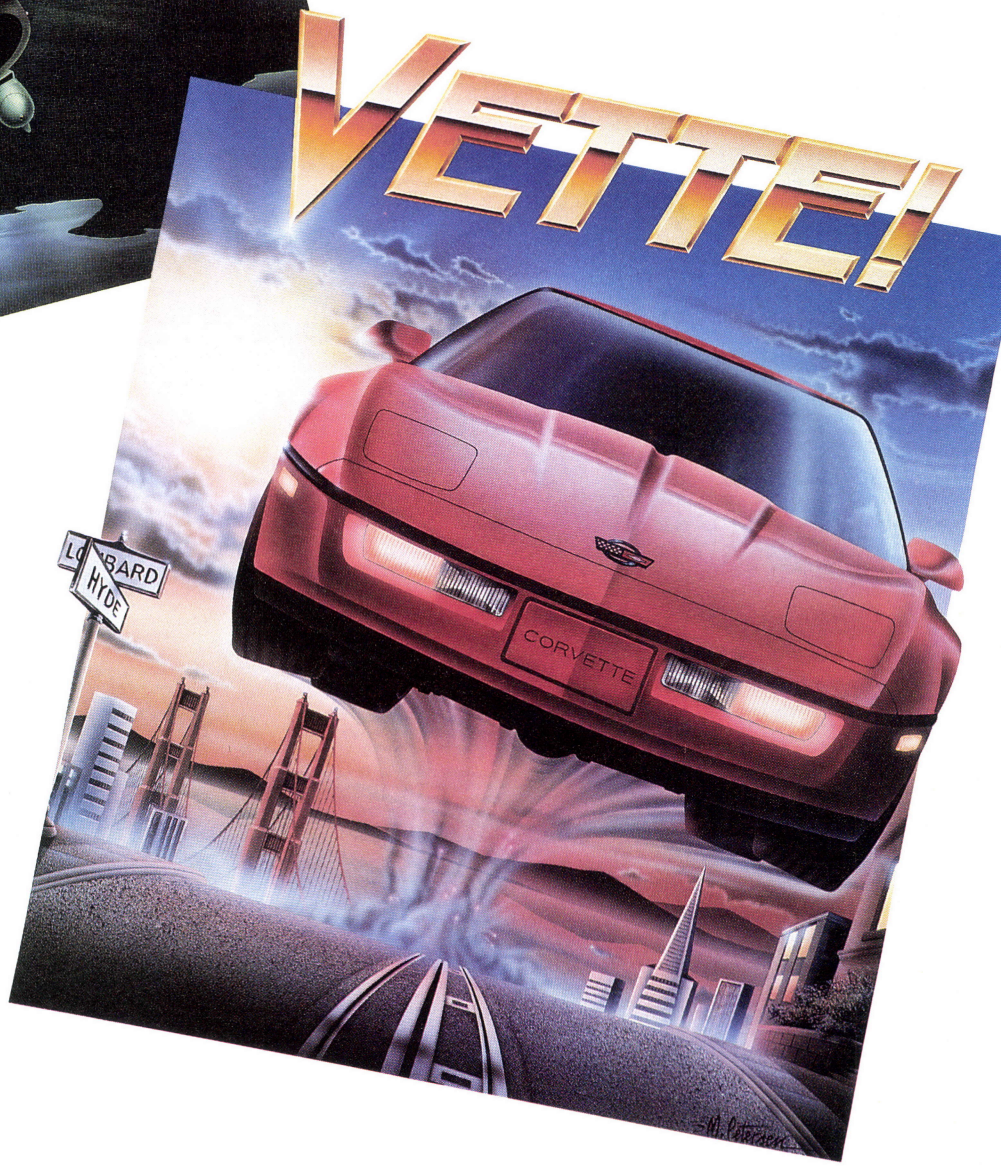
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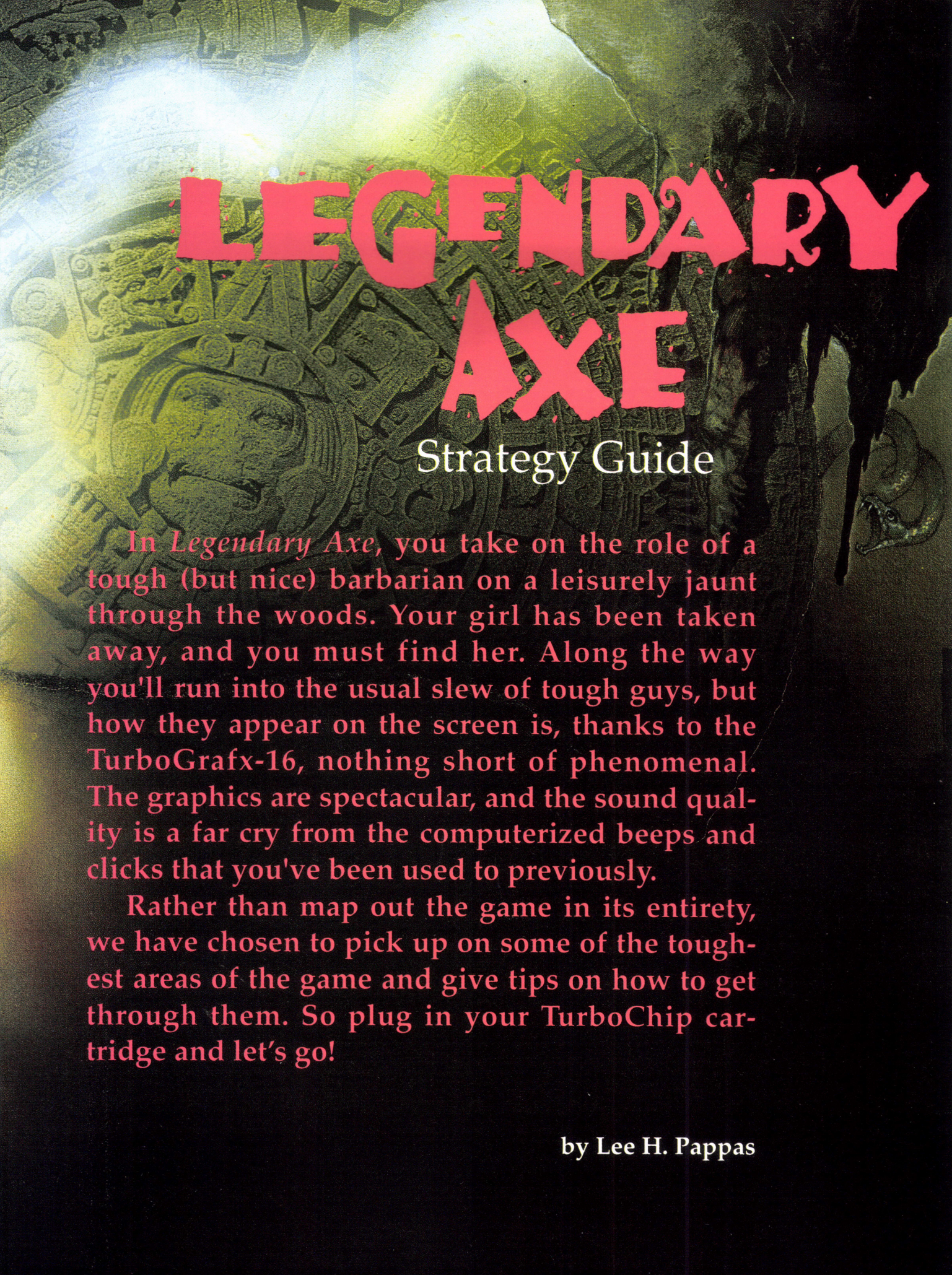
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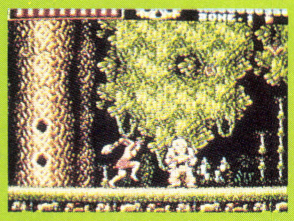
# LEGENDARY AXE

## Strategy Guide

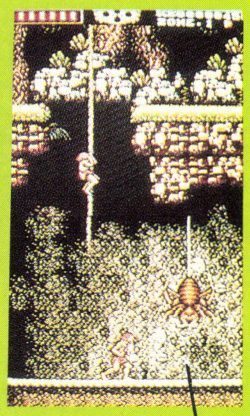
In *Legendary Axe*, you take on the role of a tough (but nice) barbarian on a leisurely jaunt through the woods. Your girl has been taken away, and you must find her. Along the way you'll run into the usual slew of tough guys, but how they appear on the screen is, thanks to the TurboGrafx-16, nothing short of phenomenal. The graphics are spectacular, and the sound quality is a far cry from the computerized beeps and clicks that you've been used to previously.

Rather than map out the game in its entirety, we have chosen to pick up on some of the toughest areas of the game and give tips on how to get through them. So plug in your TurboChip cartridge and let's go!

by Lee H. Pappas

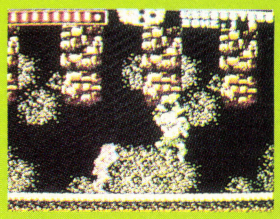


The nomads and the bats are easy to get...you're just warming up!

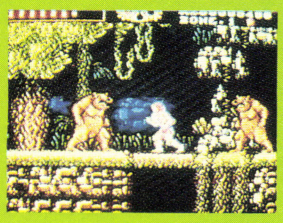


Climb down the rope and face the spider. It isn't that tough to kill; just take your time, and avoid the webs it throws out. You'll gain your first axe-strength module, power-up capsule and a gem. Go all the way to the right and get what's under the three idols, then climb the ladder.

## Axe Strength



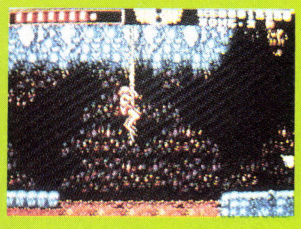
When these guys attack you on the surface, they'll follow where you go—even back down to the spider's lair.



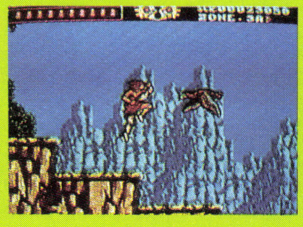
These bears aren't too bad either. Take on the one at the left first. Learn its jumping pattern after every hit, and soon you'll be able to get him easily.



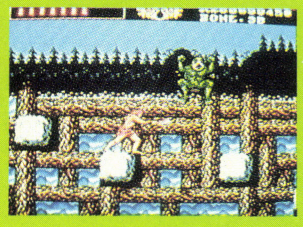
Don't miss this axe-strength module!



I hate ropes! Be careful when you jump off—the birds may knock you into the lava.

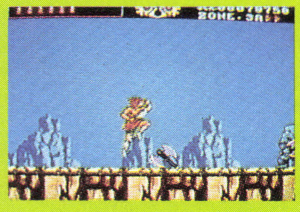


Go for these big birds first. Stay on the lower levels of the rock pillars.



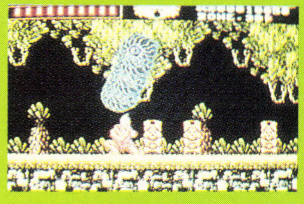
This is one tricky area. The green sea monkeys pop up and can knock you off or hit you with a fireball. You'll have to learn when they come out, then chop 'em!

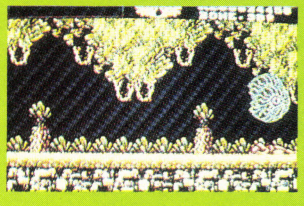




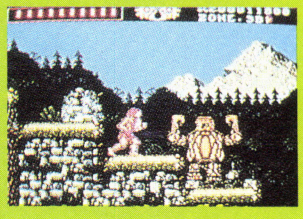


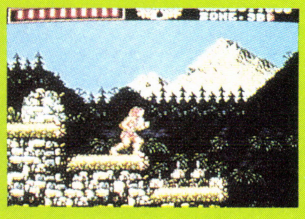
It's difficult to get by these axemen without getting injured at all. Duck, jump, duck some more, get hit, swing, jump again. (You get the idea.)



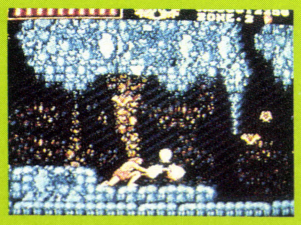


These slinky monsters are nasty. It takes a little practice, but don't even think about going after them if you don't have lots of energy. You can only kill them by standing; crouching just avoids them. Good luck!

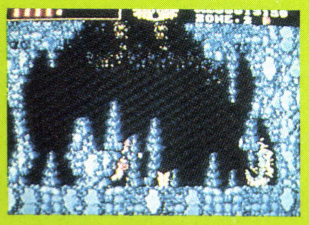




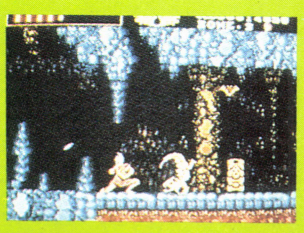
After you kill the first rockman and the jumping guy, you come up to a second rockman. Instead of killing him, just walk left at least one screen; then go back and he'll have disappeared!



Chop and jump over the bats at this level's beginning.



You'll need this axe-swing speed pod to better combat the amoebas.



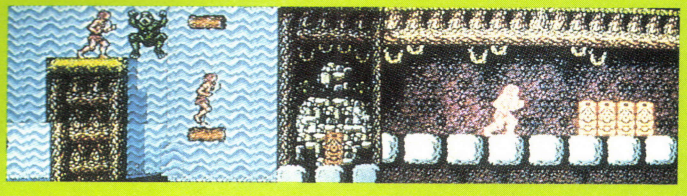


Crouch and chop! Using turbo on your controller isn't the best thing here. It's better to get your own timing on when to swing. Keep in mind that you'll have to make quite a few axe hits here. It's also better, once you are good enough, to kill all the lizards here then go back and get the idols.





The plowshare boys are best attacked with a head-on swing; then go for their kneecaps.



Jump onto a log, then immediately leap to the one above it. Continue jumping on the logs as they come over the waterfall. Get the sea monkey when he pops up, then jump onto a log and head right. Get the key, wait patiently for the water to drop and chop the idols. Watch out for the bird that comes from the right!



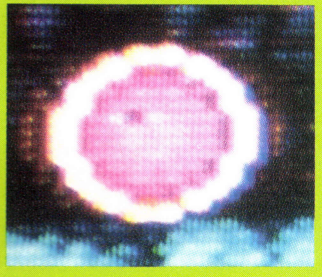
P o w e r - U p Capsule



Mini Power-Up Capsule



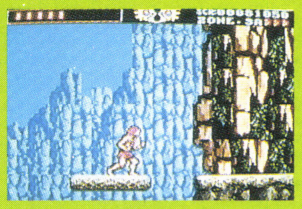
1 Up (Extra Life)



Full Power-Up Capsule



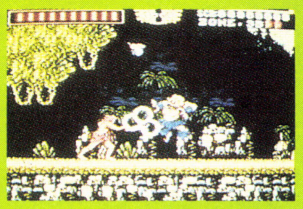
Axe Speed



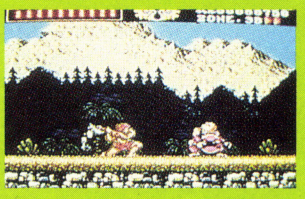
I know—I don't like this moving log either, but just jump on it and get the three idols to the right.



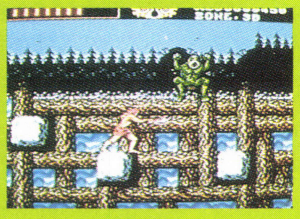
More ropes! Time them when the ropes come together the second time. I've found swinging the axe while jumping helps you get a rope you might have missed.

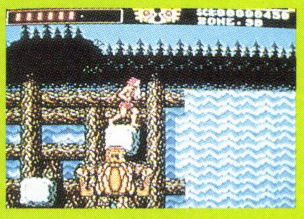


Get these guys by standing and swinging. . .

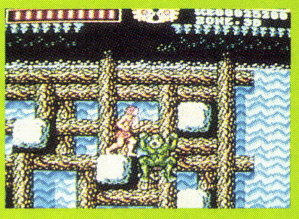


. . . and these by crouching and swinging.

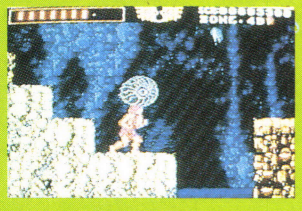




Again, learn where these come out. Just get the first and then avoid the ones after it that come in addition to the rockman.



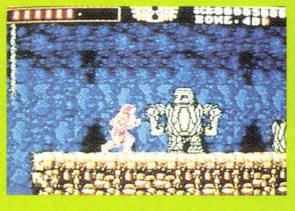
Avoid or chop this one.



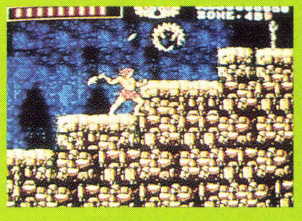
Watch out for the slinky!



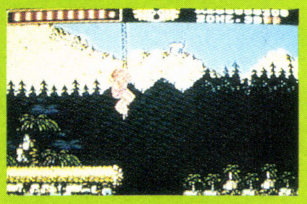
Guess what! These ropes are pretty easy! Jump on the first, and immediately go for the next two!



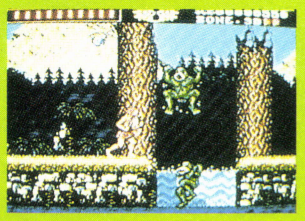
Gray rockman. No big deal.



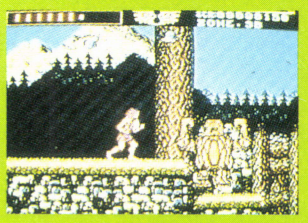
As you hack the lizards here, keep your control pad pushed to the right so you won't be knocked off.



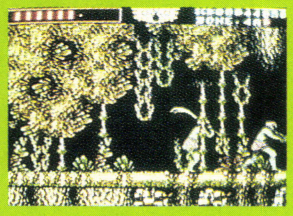
Not another rope!



And more jumping sea monkeys!

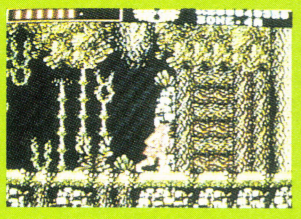


Unfortunately, this rockman won't disappear. Get him!

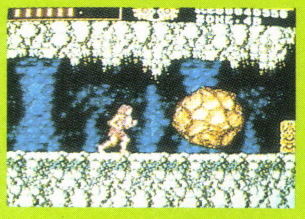




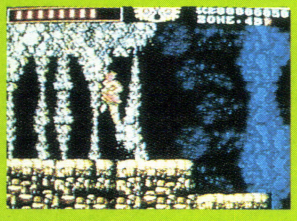
These two plowsharers will only get you if you let them. Either stay in the middle and take turns hitting one then the other, or jump to one side and get both of them over to one side.

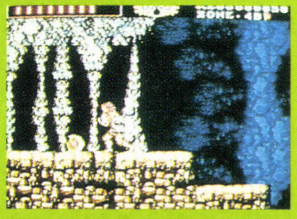


Enter the "Door of Many Logs."

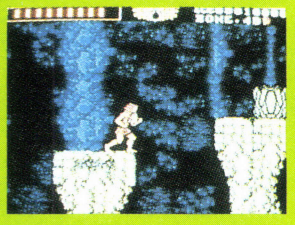


Get this boulder like you did in Zone 1. Three hits will do it. A lizard appears to the right after you get the boulder. Get it before you get that idol.

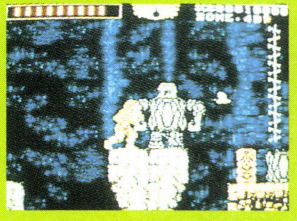


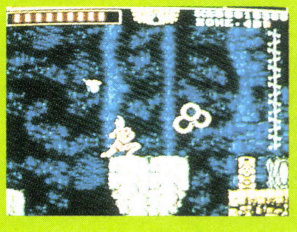


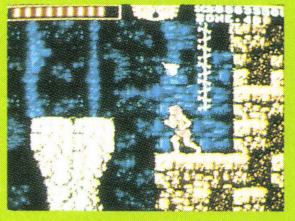
There are all sorts of things hidden in the cave roofs.



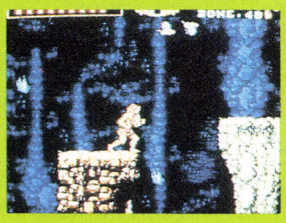
Jump to the rockman. Only two or three swings will get it. Watch out for the bird!

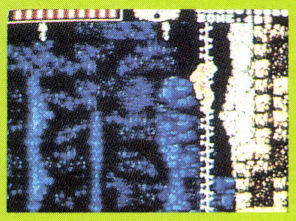




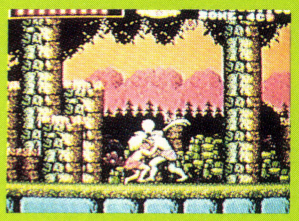


Get the last rockman then go for the idols. Push your control pad right while fighting the rockman so that you don't get knocked off.





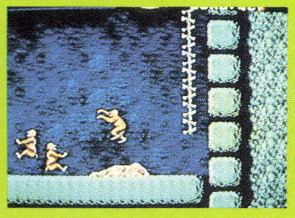
Look out for those birds!



One blow with full axe strength will take Mr. Plowsharer and most anything else.

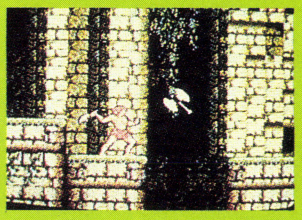


Here are two other pits. Ever had a monkey on your back? Well it ain't no picnic. If you get out of one of these, you'll be in

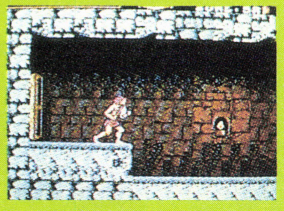


rough shape. That's why you need to know that one block on the surface to jump onto.



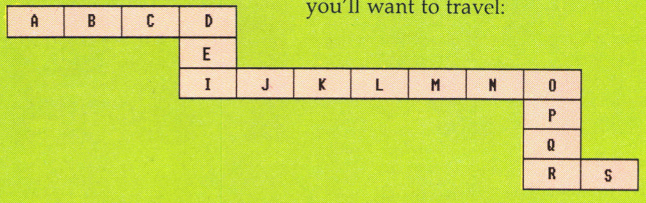


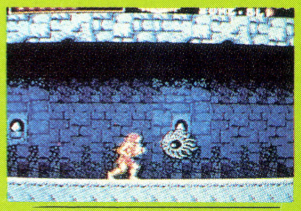
The pattern to get these axe throwers is easy, and you won't even get hit once—if you're good enough.





Here's the room order you'll want to travel:



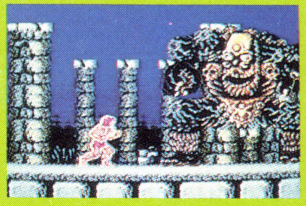



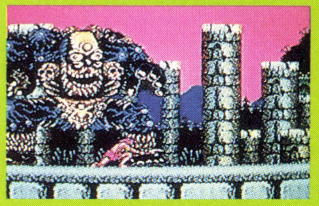
Go *slowly*! Keep your axe strength at 100%! These rooms hit you with *everything*, and Room L is the *worst*!

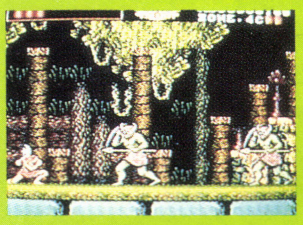


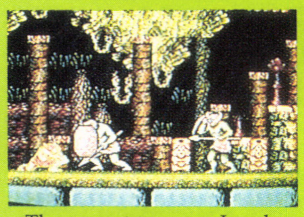
I actually like this level; it holds some fun surprises—but you also face Jagu. (Actually your face is as high as his ankle.)

Hack like heck at his ankles, and you can get him. He's a *lot* easier to deal with than the Panda!

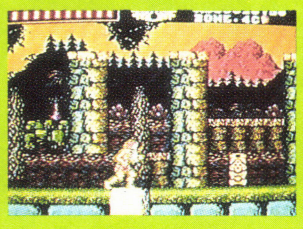






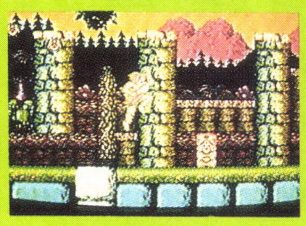


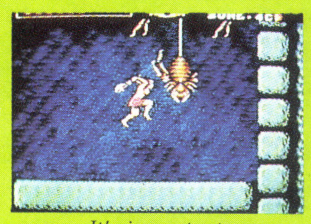
These are two guys I really despise—many a life is lost here. Here's what to do: Grab the power-up capsules just as these two nasties come out, then get to the left of both of them. (Usually only one will attack at a time.) Stay crouched and swing away. If you survive the first, your energy will probably be very low. Let the power indicator on the top of the screen go to full strength—two full power blows on the last guy should kill him. Whew!

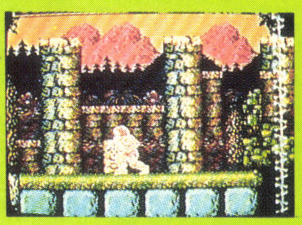




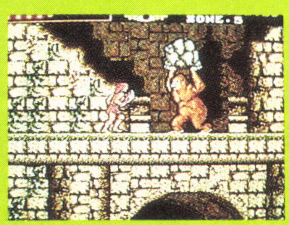
The pits. When you find the first one and fall in, you can easily destroy the two armadillos. The spider is also easy to get, and you'll receive full axe power. It's important you find the one block on the surface to jump onto. You'll need to know it later.



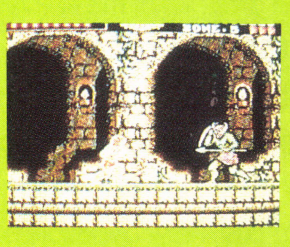




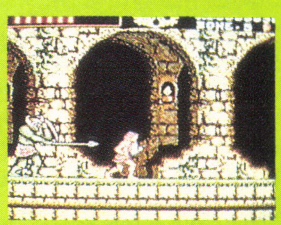




Two full-power whacks will kill Magilla Gorilla.

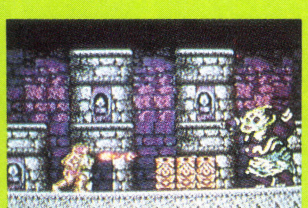


I hate this guy too. The best thing to do is jump past him and go right (you might get hit a couple of times, don't worry). Several power capsules await you, and you'll be fine.

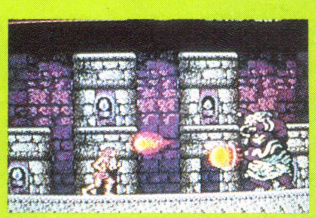




There are power capsules and other good stuff behind those pillars.

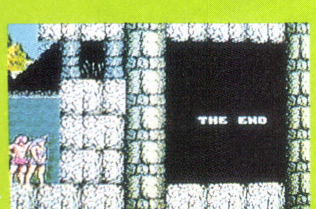


The Giant (Ugly) Panda Bear is the hardest thing in the whole game to kill—believe me. I have no plan here. If you have one, let me know!





When and if you get the Panda, climb the stairs to Zone 6.




The end! It's you and Mrs. Axe (better known as Flare).

**We'll take a more detailed look at the exciting *Legendary Axe* in an upcoming issue of TURBOPLAY—our new magazine just for the NEC TurboGrafx-16. Details on how to subscribe will appear next issue!**

# BAD DUDES MAKES DOUBLE DRAGON PALE BY COMPARISON

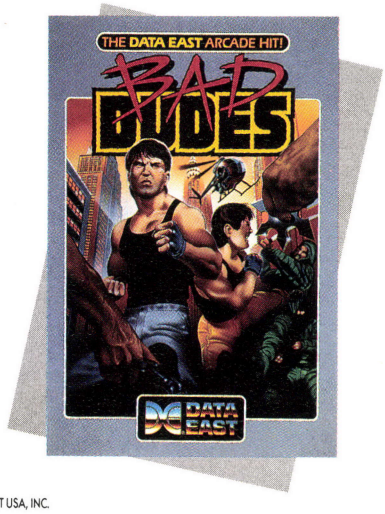
Ask anyone who's played them both in the arcade. Bad Dudes is clearly the game of choice. It's no contest.

BAD DUDES has better graphics. Better action. Better playability. From the arcade to the Nintendo to computer formats, you can count on a better game with BAD DUDES. And we're even available on more systems than they are.

The joystick play is incredible—fast, smooth and responsive. And the game play and graphics of the home versions are amazingly true to the arcade original.

Check it out for yourself. The martial arts excitement of BAD DUDES makes Double Dragon play like a dinosaur. One soon to be extinct.

BAD DUDES. From Data East. Now available on Commodore, IBM, Tandy, Amiga, Atari ST and Apple II personal computers and the Nintendo Entertainment System.







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Available for the IBM® PC/compatibles, and the Commodore 64.®

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If the prize symbol shown here exactly matches one of the prize symbols found on specially marked packages of Data East MVP Sports ABC's Monday Night Football Games, you win the prize indicated.

If you are a prize winner, claim your prize by filling in the information below and sending via certified or registered mail by January 10, 1990, to Data East MVP Sports Sweepstakes Winner, P.O. Box 8456, Beaverton, OR 97076.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

Signature _____

prize symbol



See Official Rules for details.

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# from Cartoon to Computer

by
Bill Kunkel



All characters © 1989 Hanna-Barbera Productions, Inc.
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Licensed properties are a real challenge for game designers. Unlike the typical game design, which springs from—and is limited only by—the creator's imagination, the licensed property offers an entirely new set of demands. The design must function both as a game and as an appropriate vehicle for the original license. In other words, it doesn't matter *how* good that wall-bashing game idea is; it simply won't mesh with a license for, say, James Bond. Moreover, the end results must please not only the developer and publisher, but the licensor as well, and too many cooks frequently lead to a ruined stew.



The difficulties can be magnified even further when the deal is a mega-bucks/multi-license/multiple game project. And when the characters being licensed are dearly beloved cultural icons like Barney Rubble, Mr. Spacely and Scooby Doo—well, we are *definitely* looking at a potential nightmare scenario for all concerned. Yet somehow, when speaking to sundry members of the far-flung Microlllusions design team, one gets the impression that the mega-deal which brought several of Hanna-Barbera's hottest cartoon characters to computer life has actually been a satisfying experience. A creative stretch, to be sure, but not without attendant rewards and certainly not the horror show that has befallen many past attempts to bring cartoon characters into the electronic gaming universe.

Considering the vast scope of this deal, it's something of a minor miracle that it has gone so smoothly. The project involves four initial games starring *The Jetsons, The Flintstones, Jonny Quest* and *Scooby Doo*; nine different versions; four independent development groups (in addition to the resources of H-B and Microlllusions); and a cast of almost three dozen artists, writers and programmers. [A complete listing of those involved is at the end of this article.]

To its credit, Microlllusions didn't take the easy way out on this project. Whereas most publishers would have designed a single game system, with separate scenarios for each of the cartoon stars, Microlllusions decided early on that these would be individual projects. "Right from the beginning," asserts Microlllusion's Bob Shaw, "it was intended that there would be four totally separate games." To that end, each game was assigned to a different development group, with all four under the direction of Sean Barger.

Barger picked up this challenging assignment while working as a senior producer for Spectrum HoloByte. At a trade show, Microlllusions' president, Jim Steinert, was checking out the Spectrum-HoloByte booth when he ran into Barger, who had produced such titles as *Intrigue, SokoBan, Dondra* and *Tetris* for S-H. They struck up a conversation, and the subject of dream projects came up. "I'd love to do a *Flintstones* or *Jetsons* game," Barger confessed. This remark produced an immediate grin on Steinert's face. "We beat you to it," he told Barger, explaining that Microlllu-

sions had already acquired the coveted licenses (from Hanna-Barbera's exclusive licensing representative, N.Y.-based Hamilton Projects). "My eyes definitely popped," admitted Barger.

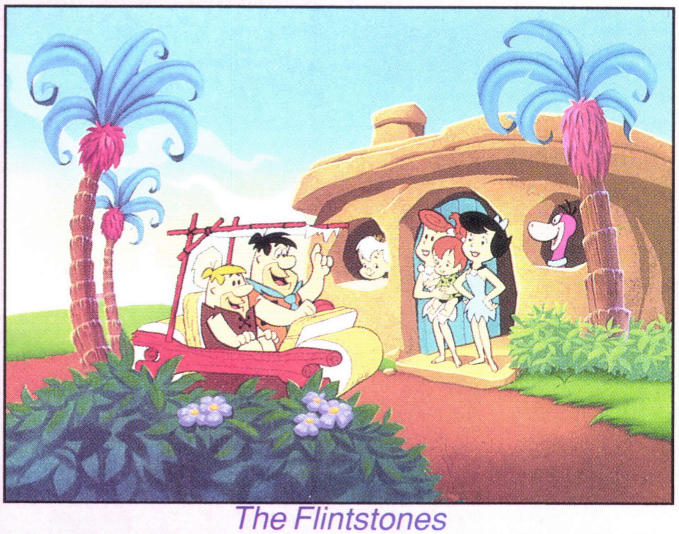
Once Barger's eyes returned to his head, the two men began discussions that ultimately led to Barger's being assigned to coordinate the entire project. The first step involved finding the right developers to handle the individual game titles.

*The Flintstones*, perhaps the best-known and most valuable of the four licenses, was passed into the capable hands of a group headed by Brian Rice. "Microlllusions talked to us and said, basically, they wanted a *Flintstones* game and they had an adventure in mind," Rice related. "We sat down for several days with Sean Barger and Jack Thornton going over ideas. We talked about adventure games, what we liked about them and what we didn't really like."

The end result is an easy-to-play game with strong visuals and genuine appeal for both younger players and their parents. "Things don't have to be super-convoluted to appeal to adults. The goal here is to enjoy yourself," Rice commented. "There are no great puzzles. Fred doesn't die. But as you play, you get involved in some crazy situations. Sometimes, the worse you play, the more fun you have! The object is simple: Get Fred in and out of trouble."

*The Flintstones* employs one of the most innovative "framing" devices ever seen: The entire game is displayed on a Bedrock-style TV set! The game also includes Stone-Age newscasts, the familiar cast of characters and all the Stone-Age gag props a *Flintstone* fanatic could want. "There's a closet," Rice told us, "and if Fred opens it, all these bowling balls fall on him. It isn't any big clue or anything, it's just a gag."

The developers even put a clever spin on the whole dynamic by allowing users to change the channel on the TV set. "If you change the channel," Rice explained, "the game continues as if it were a [non-interactive] cartoon. When the game reaches a decision tree, the game decides for you, and it will continue down that path while you watch the Bedrock News [for example]."



*The Flintstones*

The question of who to assign *The Jetsons* to was simplified when Rob and Michael McNally of the Dreamer's Guild development group approached Microlllusions. "When we heard about the Hanna-Barbera licenses going to Microlllusions, we expressed a distinct interest in doing *The Jetsons*," said Rob McNally. As it happened, the McNallys had already created an adventure system they felt would be ideal for this game. "We were inspired by the click-on graphic interface systems used in games like *Deja Vu* and *Tass Times in Tone Town*. We felt we could do all of that, and do it better, with real-time animation and [the ability to] click on moving objects."



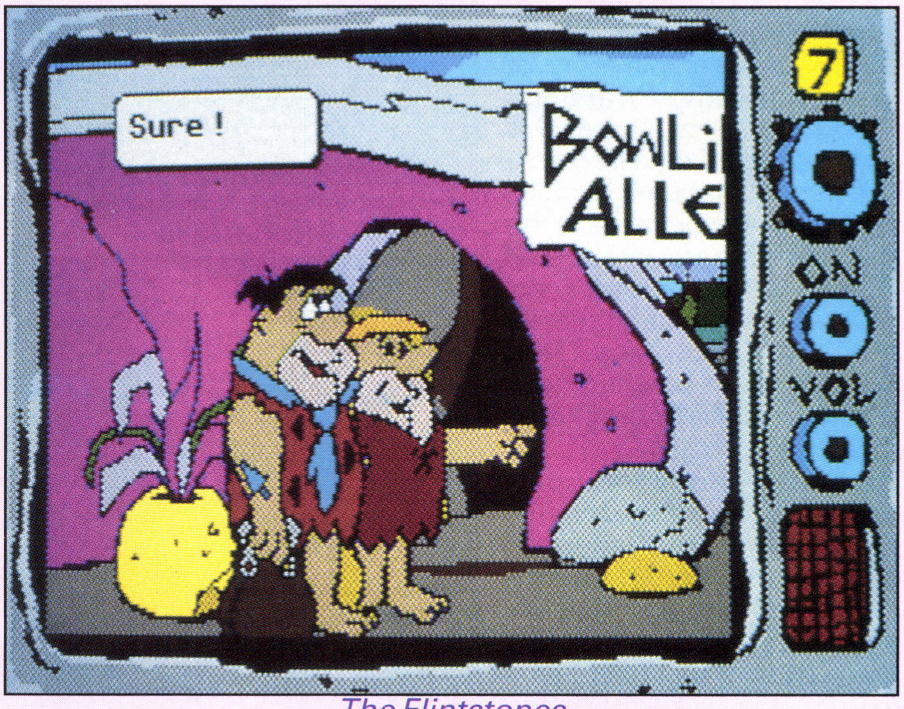

*George Jetson & the Legend of Robotopia*




The McNallys' "environment for interactive storytelling" would be written in "D," a language they invented. "It's 'D' because it comes after 'C', and because we're called the Dreamer's Guild," Rob McNally revealed. "This system isn't revolutionary, it's evolutionary. We felt the biggest turn-off in these games was the typing, so we entirely eliminated it and replaced it with an actions area where textual actions appear that the user can click-on. There are also conversations [which can be selected through a similar interface], and different selections will produce different outcomes. There's also a character window in the upper right-hand corner and a main

screen display,called the stage."

As in all four projects, the designers were striving to create an interactive cartoon. McNally said: "We basically wrote a *Jetsons'* episode, though there are more subplots than there would be in a half-hour episode. The player is George, and the only way to lose is for George to be fired. As the game begins, George wakes up for work and discovers the alarm clock has been disassembled. He's very well rested and also very late."



*The Flintstones*

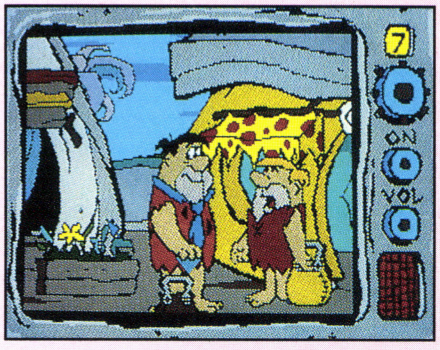
In keeping with the feel of the original show, the *Jetsons* game, *George Jetson & the Legend of Robotopia*, is brimming with wild, futuristic gadgetry. "Some of the gadgets are crucial, some are not critical and some are just for fun. We have lots of extraneous objects that are there simply to provide color and to be entertaining."

This new game system, dubbed "Dream World" by its creators, allows for enormous scope, including numerous objects, over 95 locations, approximately 90 scenes (a scene, such as the Jetsons' apartment, may include several locations) and two planets (Earth and Robotopia). This game engine is especially well-suited to the technological wonderland of the Jetsons' future, with its comical gadgets and gizmos. The plot involves George's attempts to hold onto his job, with the usual comic complications, including a side trip to Robotopia with his boy Elroy and pet pooch Astro, where they meet up with the Aborigibots, a tribe of mechanical aboriginees.

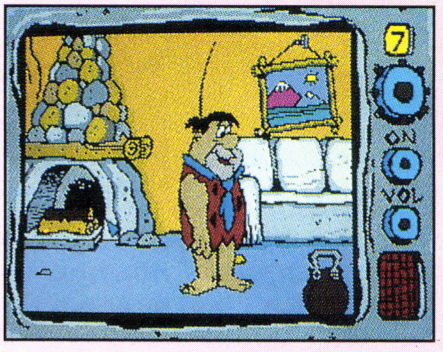
"[Rob and Michael McNally] already had the engine for this game, and they knew exactly what they wanted," said Barger. "We simply pointed out possible enhancements and additions. We foresaw problems with the graphics [for example]. There are 95 locations, 25-30 of them with animations, so we used larger-sized pencils. Rob and Michael had a great, original storyline, which we let them design and implement. They showed a painstaking attention to detail."

*Jonny Quest* is the most straightforward, realistic title of the four licenses, a traditional dramatic adventure series with sporadic doses of comedy relief. The quest to do *Quest*, however, hit an early snag when Troy Lyndon's Pacific Data Works, the developers who were given the original assignment, disbanded after starting on the project. "The design spec was *huge*," explained Barger, who, along with Troy Lyndon and Jim Haldy, produced the original document. "We fleshed it out and Troy added text, at which point it had everything but playability. Two months later we did a *new* spec, and then Pacific Data Works went out of business." Fortunately, PDW's Jim Haldy formed his own company at that point and was able to pick up the baton and continue running, so the project didn't really lose too much steam.

Even so, Barger soon realized that a piece of the creative puzzle was missing, so he called in Microllusions' writer Curtis Norris who, along with Dave Jennings, met at Barger's home for a marathon, three-day meeting. "Getting away from the office like that really let us think," said Barger. "We all brainstormed together, and we ended up with this huge document."



*The Flintstones*



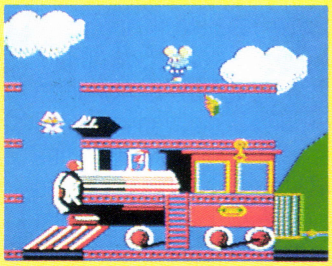
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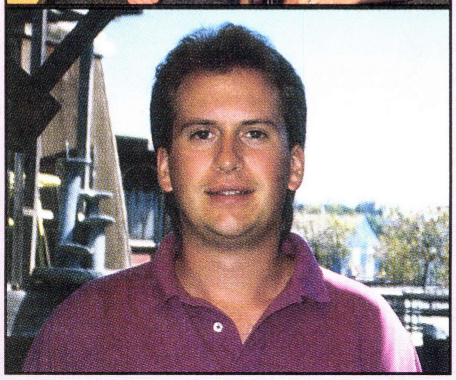


*Top: (left to right) Jim Steinert, Curtis Norris, Phil Moody, Tyson Walch, Bob Shaw, Jimmy Saiki, David Boyles.*

*Middle: Bob Dronski, Brian Rice, Glenn Leszczak, Rian Murphy.*

*Bottom: Sean Barger.*





"I grew up as a fan of *Jonny Quest*," Haldy told us, "and I wanted to recreate the idea of mystery that was so important to the show. Every show was a mystery which served as the backdrop for the adventure." In fact, *Jonny Quest and the Splinter of Heaven* sounds like a typical episode of the cult classic TV show. Jonny, his Indian buddy Hadji and dog Bandit take off from Dr. Benton Quest's Palm Key Island sanctum in search of the pilfered Splinter of Heaven, a meteorite remnant that seems to be causing profound fluctuations in the Earth's magnetic field. It should come as little surprise to any *JQ* fan that the behind-the-scenes baddie here is none other than the ubiquitous Dr. Zin, Jonny's number-one villian.

"There are three quests," Bob Shaw explained, "with the first one set in the Mayan jungles. There's a hidden temple they must find the entrance to and various objects which they can pick up along the way." As in *Flintstones*, *JQ* offers mini-arcade sequences. Every time Jonny encounters one of the bad guys, the program toggles to an action sequence in which the user manipulates Jonny, via mouse or joystick, for a little hand-to-hand combat. "Also, depending on which objects you collect, Hadji or Bandit may help out. If you defeat the bad guys, the game returns you to the previous screen," and the adventure resumes. True to its source material, *JQ* is a true globetrotting adventure, with a premium on solving puzzles and getting out of dangerous situations.

While the player controls Jonny directly, Hadji follows along and assists in combat scenarios while Bandit, in typical canine fashion, is apt to go wandering off on his own. "We had no specific age group in mind when we designed this game," explained Haldy. "At the start of this project, IBM programmer Dave Jannings, who's fairly young, had no idea who Jonny Quest was." After viewing the various episodes provided by Hanna-Barbera and reading numerous *JQ* comic books, however, "He got addicted. Now he buys the *Jonny Quest* comics all the time."

*JQ* also employs some sophisticated conversational techniques. Jonny can maintain voice contact with his father and sidekick Race by selecting the appropriate channel on his Dick Tracy-like Wrist Communicator. There are also face-to-face dialogues featuring close-ups of the conversants with their mouths moving in perfect synch with the menu-selected dialogue.

The final Hanna-Barbera license was *Scooby Doo*, the adventures of the cowardly dog Scooby and his human pals Shaggy, Freddy, Velma and Daphne. Though not endowed with the same cult status as the other three, MicroIllusions and the development team lead by Hal Rushton treated the characters with the same respect. *Scooby Doo—A Mystery Adventure Game* includes four mini-adventures: Ghost Town, Ski Village, Dayman's Haunted Mansion and The Mystery of the Aztec Sea Monster, and each scenario has its own action game.

"There's a skiing sequence in the Ski Village game, for example," offered Shaw, "where Scooby actually skis down a hill. Then there's a cliff-diving game and a target-shooting game and a skeet-shooting game."






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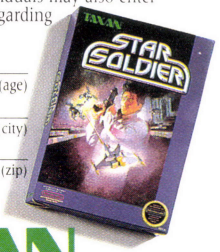
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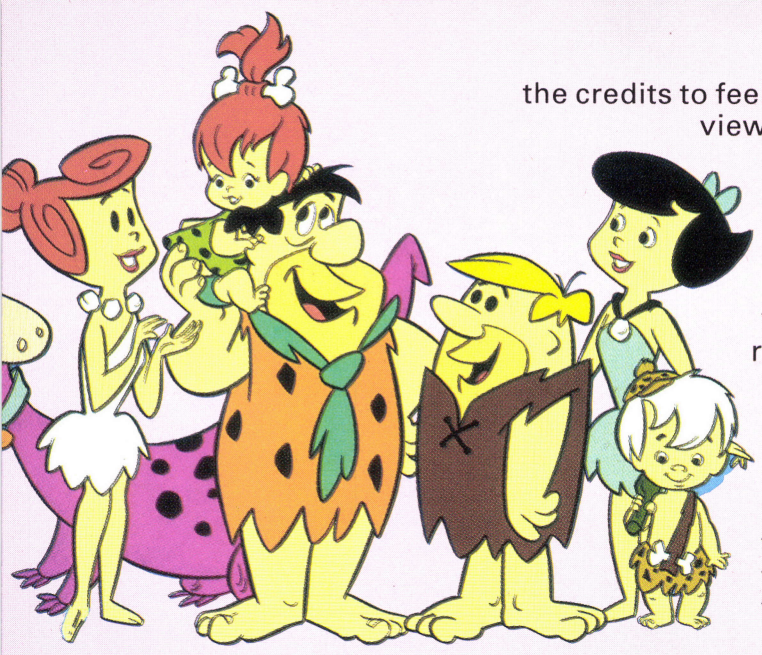



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In order to win the game, the player must amass enough evidence to reveal the true identity of the Yeti or abominable snowman. "But you can't just guess," cautioned Barger. "You can't win until you've passed the required evidence quotient." Each of the *Scooby* scenarios has a full cast of characters with whom the player may interact,and it will even be possible to break up the adventurers into four separate parties. Other arcade sequences feature scuba diving, mountain climbing, horse racing, a mine ride and numerous chase sequences.

"The challenge with *Scooby* was trying to maintain a cartoon 'look' despite the small size of the on-screen characters. But Les Pardew created some great EGA graphics. I also felt we needed additional writers," so Curtis Norris was once again summoned.

Keeping the 'look' of these games consistent with their source material was, in fact, the greatest challenge each of the development groups faced. "It's difficult to maintain that cartoon attitude," Barger admitted. "On *Jonny Quest* we wanted even the credits to feel like you were viewing a cartoon. We did the copyright in Roman numerals, for example, and I was listed as 'director' rather than 'project manager.'

"I think *The Flintstones* probably maintains that attitude the best of the four games."

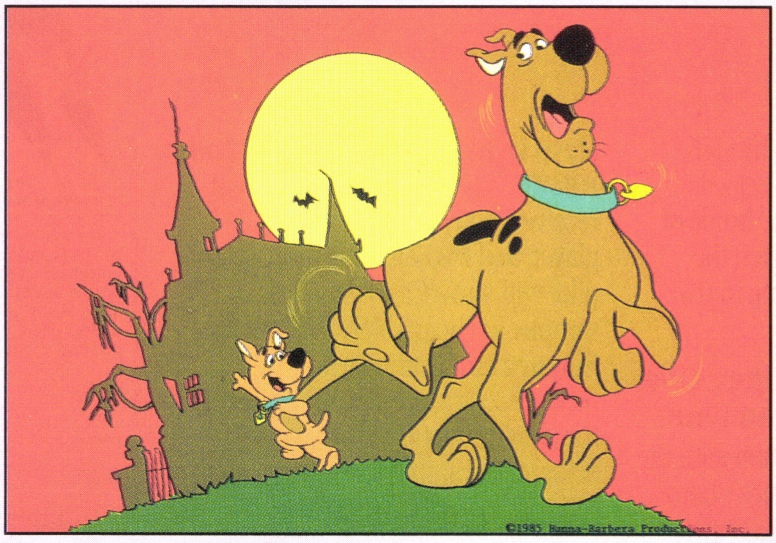
"Everyone who came to the [*Flintstones* design meetings] was familiar with the original show," said Brian Rice. "We sat there and really analyzed the graphic movement. The characters are so large on screen that graphics were always part of the design. In fact, we made some significant technical advances with this project." Brian's group developed a technique which transformed the on-screen characters into 'containers' which could hold any one of 20 different mouths, sets of eyes, etc. Fred could therefore be induced to grumble by simply assigning a grumbling mouth to the character at the desired point in the game.

One of the reasons this project has gone so smoothly is Hanna-Barbera's attitude toward it. Rather than meddling in creative matters, H-B was content to merely supply Microlllusions with a mountain of videotape, then stand back and let them do their job. "We got a *lot* of VHS tapes from Hanna-Barbera," said Bob Shaw. "[Each member of the team then] sat home and watched them, then we'd exchange what we had with one another, just to get the proper feel for each of the storylines. We've really tried to follow that and give the games the feel of a cartoon.

"Hanna-Barbera has been reviewing the development of these games for their approval. We want to avoid a situation where they discover there's something they don't like after we've done it. So far, I believe they've been pleased with the results."

The project was also something of a balancing act. "In *Jonny Quest*, for example, we wanted there to be a lot of *adventure* but not a lot of violence—nobody dies in these games, for example. On the other hand, we want to keep it sophisticated enough that it appeals to the entire spectrum of the audience, from youngsters to older players in their 30s and 40s."

Perhaps the most complicated issue associated with this series of games is the release schedule. "*The Jetsons* on the Amiga should be ready first, sometime in either the end of September or early October. Next, I'd say *Scooby Doo* on the IBM. We had originally planned for the Apple IIGS version to also be released at that time, but because of some unforeseen complexities, we swapped it with the





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Amiga version, so sometime in October [expect those two versions], followed by *Scooby* on the C-64. *Jonny Quest* should be out for the IBM and C-64 in November. *The Flintstones* on the IBM should be ready before the end of the year, in time for Christmas, with the IIGS version in January and the C-64 version in February."

The task of bringing characters as beloved as Fred Flintstone and Jonny Quest to a new medium is almost a sacred trust, and it's obvious that the design teams took that to heart. The Hanna-Barbera games represent a high water mark in the licensing of cartoon characters to computer gaming, both for the faithfulness of the translation and the quality of the final product.

All that remains to be seen now is how the computer marketplace will receive these characters as electronic-gaming stars. Will the appeal remain strong throughout the wide age range? To intelligently answer this question, we have prevailed upon Astro, the Jetson's faithful pooch and an extremely articulate member of the canine kingdom, to give us a little bit of insight.

When asked what he saw as the "future" of the MicroIllusions/Hanna-Barbera partnership, he was brief and to the point: "Rots of ruccess," he assured us. "Rots and *rots* of ruccess!"

## Roll Credits, Please!

The following is a listing of the people responsible for the four MicroIllusions/H-B properties:

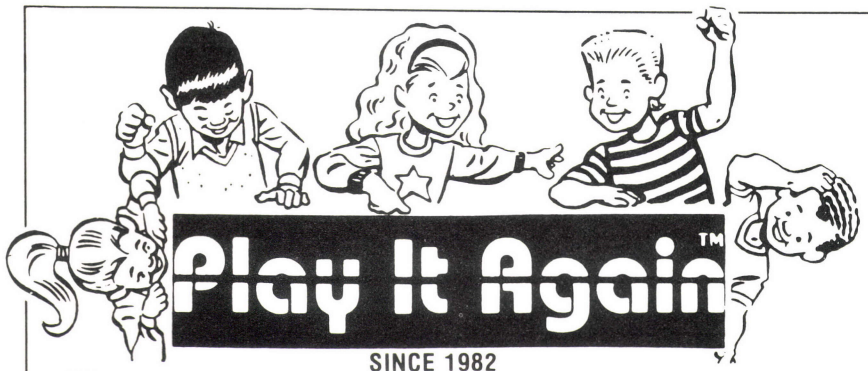
*The Flintstones*
Design by: Brian Rice, Sean Barger, Jack Thornton, Bob Dronski, Roger Surbough, Rian Murphy
Written by: Rian Murphy
Graphics and Animations by: Rick Incrocci
Animators: Bob Dronski, Brian Rice, Glen Leszczak

*The Jetsons: "George Jetson & the Legend of Robotopia"*
DreamWorld Adventure Environment by Robert and Michael McNally, ©1989 the Dreamers Guild.
Story, Design & Programming: Robert and Michael McNally
Project Coordination: Sean Barger
Animation: Heidi Turnipseed
Pencils: Heidi Turnipseed, Ed Cassel, Bonnie Long-Hemsath
Amiga Painting: Heidi Turnipseed, Dan Guerra, Bonnie Long-Hemsath, Chris Caracci
Macintosh Painting: Mimi Foord, Mike Nowak
Music Arrangement: Craig Knudsen, Matt Nathan

*Jonny Quest and the Splinter of Heaven*
Directed by: Sean Barger
Designed by: James R. Haldy, Dave Jennings, Sean Barger
Story by: Curtis Norris
Special Thanks to: Troy A. Lyndon
Graphics by: James R. Haldy, Maureen Kringen
Additional Graphic Support by: Prism Computer Graphics

*Scooby Doo: A Mystery Adventure Game*
Game Design: John and Anneli Motter, Hal Rushton, Peter Ward, Sean Barger
Written by: Curtis Norris
Music by: Paul Webb
Directed by: Sean Barger
Project Manager: Hal Rushton






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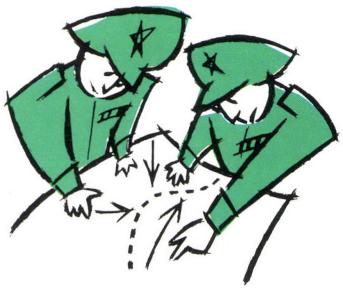
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# Battle Combat Course . . . and Win!

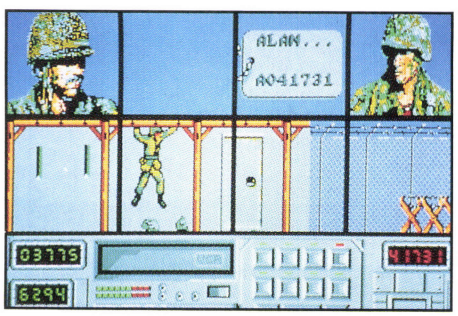
**Mindscape**

Versions: Amiga, Atari ST, Commodore 64, IBM PC

*Combat Course* places the player in a special-forces training camp. The object: Successfully complete the army's intense obstacle course before time expires. This wouldn't be so bad if the course was like the ones we see in the movies. Unfortunately, this one isn't limited to the ever-popular ladder climbs and barbed-wire fences. It is also riddled with land mines, vicious attack dogs and enemy gunfire. The game is divided into three separate stages, and each requires the player to tackle a variety of challenges.

### Level 1—Physical

First up is a test of the player's ability to maneuver through the obstacle course as quickly as possible. It is the easiest of the




three levels, so use this opportunity to practice the basic maneuvers. Remember to keep the soldier running, as points are deducted every time he stops. Also, keep a close eye on the orders window, which will graphically deliver one of three possible commands:

- The first picture is of an enemy helicopter, signifying an air raid. The player should hit the dirt immediately until the picture disappears.
- The second possible command depicts a picture of Rex the combat dog. When this happens, quickly jump up on a ladder until Rex goes away. If there is no ladder nearby, head for a tree, and leap onto a branch.
- The last command is to do ten push-ups. This order, too, must be followed until the picture disappears. Failure to comply with any of the sergeant's orders will cause points to be deducted rapidly, so don't delay when this drill instructor appears.

The only other trick to Level 1 is climbing over a wall or out of a ditch. Here, the game seems to be a bit fickle about when the fire button should be pressed. Try to tap the button when the soldier is about half an inch from the wall. Hitting it at any other time causes the cadet to smash into the barrier and fall down, wasting valuable time.

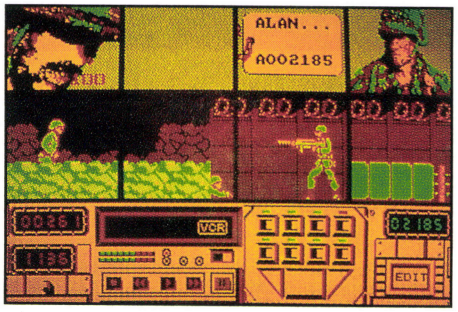
### Level 2—Risk

Level 2 works much the same way as Level 1, with one big difference: The player must now use dynamite and grenades as well as duck enemy gunfire.

When a grenade is picked up, throw it *immediately*. The instructions do not mention that once the grenade is obtained, it must be tossed within five seconds or it will explode. Each grenade thrown properly is worth 1,000 points, so try not to miss these score-builders.

Dynamite is also worth 1,000 points *if* it is detonated in front of a doorway. The dynamite can be found in the smaller crates identified by a white sticker. Once the soldier obtains the dynamite, he can hold it without fear of detonation. However, once the explosive is dropped, he has five seconds to run before it goes off.

Occasionally a picture of a soldier aiming a machine gun appears in the orders window. This signifies enemy gunfire. When this happens, quickly look to the left side of the screen to see the level the flak is approaching




from. If it is coming across at waist level, hit the dirt fast. If the fire is along the ground, start running and jump just before it hits the soldier's heels.

The last trick to Level 2 is riding the pulleys.

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When the soldier jumps up and grabs the pulley, he begins to coast along the wire toward the other side. Remember *not* to release the button under any circumstances until the soldier is over land again. If the button is released too early, the soldier plunges into the ocean and the game ends. This is the only way to actually kill the soldier and terminate game play, so be careful.

### Level 3—Combat

Level 3 sets four different types of enemy infantry after our hero as he traverses the course. The first is one single trooper who pops on-screen facing the soldier, with a gun pointed at him. He is the simplest to deal with: Simply shoot him the second he appears.

The second enemy soldier comes running up from behind. Once he appears, pull out the gun, turn around and let him have it. If he does manage to knock your soldier down before you can fire, do *not* get up and shoot the enemy in the back as he runs away. The sergeant sees this as cowardice and will deduct 500 points.

The third enemy is an armed soldier who appears first on-screen with his back turned. Again, shooting him in the back will cost the player 500 points. Instead, get down and crawl toward him until the computer forces your character back on his feet. Then quickly kick the enemy; he'll go right down. If your soldier stands before the computer makes him, the enemy will turn and begin hand-to-hand combat.

The last type of enemy is the man with no gun. This toughie can kill you with his bare hands. To deal with him, kick or punch him as fast as the button can be pressed. Don't bother with defense as it only serves to prolong the fight, and the computer man will continue to punch and kick at a steady pace.

As long as your soldier keeps up a strong offense, the enemy will soon be hitting the dirt.

**—Frank Tetro**

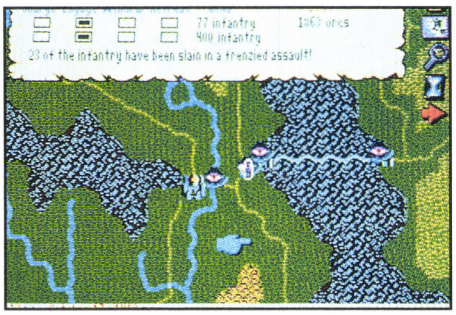
# Warnings on the War in Middle Earth

## Melbourne House

Versions: Amiga, Apple IIGS, Atari ST, IBM PC

A quick scan of the material might prompt some gamers to resort to Clauswitz or possibly Jim Dunnigan, but the key to winning *War in Middle Earth* is not found in a book of combat strategy.

Despite the presence of large troop formations, it is wasteful to spend time trying to hone military tactics to razor sharpness. In the long run, the key to victory is how well




the player manipulates the individual characters in the game.

Those who want to delve deeply into *War in Middle Earth* will be glad to hear that a hint book is already available: It's called *Lord of the Rings*, by J.R.R. Tolkien. It is both a strength and a weakness of this strategy contest that the artificial intelligence is closely modeled on the plot of the trilogy. Study of the fantasy masterpiece is certain to improve performance in the computer game.

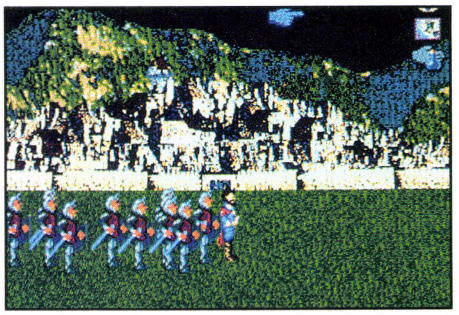
Since the time crunch and a shortage of units are against the player, there's little room for miscalculation. Monitor the enemy's movements and locate the various gifts and objects needed in the quest. The robot adversary is somewhat predictable, and the alert player will note weakness in one session that can be exploited during the next run through the program.

The Nazgul are Mordor's most potent weapon. Always note where they go, and estimate their further movement once they go invisible. Protecting your character from the Nazgul is the prime objective in the opening stage. One good strategy is to delay sending the heroes toward Mordor for the first few turns. Split up Frodo, Sam and Pippen, and send them further into the Shire rather than towards Bree. This keeps them safe from the Nazgul and provides needed objects.

Character activation is another important aspect of play. An unactivated hero is useless to the computerist. Failure to get important ones like Aragon into the fray can cost the Fellowship the game. Fortunately, unactivated characters move on a rigid schedule. So if Aragon has already left Bree, look for him at Weathertop. *Lord of the Rings* can be used to predict these routes.

Also, you should knock out Saruman early to bring the Riders south for the real onslaught. It is prudent to keep some forces in Hornburg, because Saruman doesn't die easily.

The northern troops are handy for mopping up the mountains and holding Thranduil's palace and Lorien. The southern hordes always take the same road, so they are vulnerable to a small force (2,000 men or so) behind fortified walls along the path. The rest of



Gondor's forces must mass at Minas Tirith to hold off what seems like 20 billion orcs coming out of Minas Morgul.

Lingering images on the animation level occasionally prevent a character from picking up an object. If it happens, go up a level, return to the animation screen and try again. Bringing another character to the same spot, so the screen is refreshed, also works.

Never lose sight of the goal: The One Ring must be thrown into Mt. Doom. Sooner or later, the gamer will have to sneak or escort


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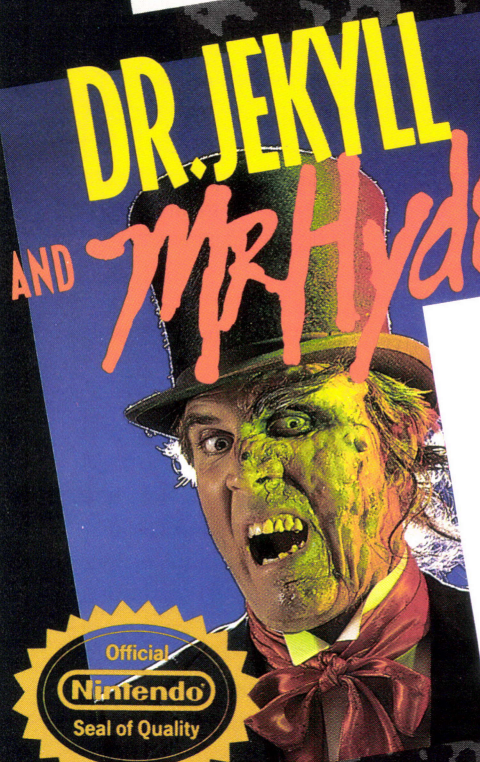
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the Ring Bearer to Mt. Doom, and wisdom and experience recommend the former method.

That's what worked in the trilogy, and it is just as effective in *War in Middle Earth*. A bold dash to the mountain only causes the evil defense forces to flock to the east. If Mordor's minions are waiting at Mt. Doom, the cause of Good is not likely to triumph.

Burning up troops to divert Sauron too early in the game leaves the player without enough units to adequately defend him. Once the Ringbearer gets close, every move should have only one purpose: to neutralize any obstacles that impede further progress toward the volcano.

Despite the triple-tiered construction and number of individual units, *War in Middle Earth* is not especially difficult. Careful observation of the computerized foe and a working knowledge of the trilogy will enable the gamer to break the Dark Lord's power by destroying the One Ring.

**—Vince Puglia and Arnie Katz**

# Be a Big Shot at the Shufflepuck Cafe

## Broderbund

Version: Macintosh

Welcome to Shufflepuck Cafe, where the elite among the galaxy's air-hockey gunslingers meet, mingle and match up to see who will hold top-dog status. Oh, sure, there's a pretender or two in among the contenders, but most of these folks are legitimate heavy hitters who'll drive a puck down an opponent's throat as soon as whistle. Actually, since several of the alien species represented here don't appear to have lips, driving a puck down an opponent's throat would probably be far preferable.

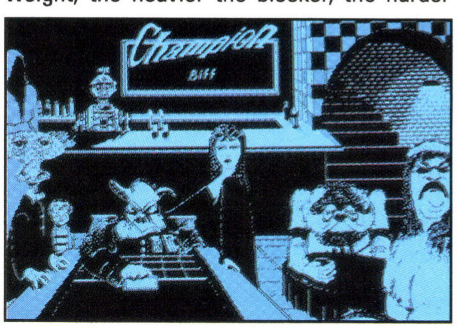
As with any game that depends primarily on the user's hand-eye coordination, practice is the only surefire method of significantly improving one's score in *Shufflepuck Cafe*. Nonetheless, a thorough understanding of how the game works and a careful evaluation of the opposition can provide some shortcuts.

### High-Tech Air Hockey

Air hockey is a head-to-head contest in which two opponents attempt to score on one another by shooting a small, disclike puck into the other player's goal. The table is comparable in size to a billiard table, with one player positioned at each of the shorter sides. The gamers are each equipped with a striker or paddle which resembles a small plastic sombrero and is used, in the manner of a hockey stick, both to take and block shots.

What makes the contest especially interesting, however, is the speed at which the puck travels. The surface of an air-hockey table is dotted with tiny holes. Air is pumped through these holes, creating an invisible air layer on which the lightweight puck literally floats.

The table in *Shufflepuck Cafe* is pretty traditional, except for the addition of "blockers." These blockers are located at the middle of the table and move randomly back and forth in a line parallel to the players, creating an obstacle for both sides. Blockers are optional and come in small, medium and large sizes, along with a feature that allows the user to create his or her own. When creating a custom blocker, the user selects both its size and weight; the heavier the blocker, the harder




and faster the puck rebounds off it.

The presence of blockers rather than a straight-ahead blaster benefits the angle-oriented player. If the user has mastered the art of the ricochet, blockers will probably help him, especially in a match against a straightforward slammer like house-champ Biff Raunch. Blockers are less likely to be of assistance in a contest with Nerval or Princess Bejin (see "Scouting the Competition").

The user also has the option of redefining their paddle. Unlike traditional strikers, which have rounded sides and, therefore, no flat contact point, the paddles in *Shufflepuck* are squared. The default paddle occupies 20% of the table's horizontal space, but it can be reset until it's a virtual two-by-four, taking up the entire lane.

The impact of the paddle's striking surfaces can also be modified. Both the "bounce" and the "power" of the paddle's front and side surfaces can be amped up, until the user possesses a striker with the punch of a Mike Tyson combination. The paddles can even be set differently with the mouse button up or down. The user may prefer for the striking surfaces to be higher with the button pressed, for example, so that hitting the button will give a shot additional impact. Remember, contenders can adapt to play at almost any speed, so if your shot speed is set all the way to the top, there's no way to get that little *extra* boost when it's really needed.

### Scouting the Competition

"Know thy opponent," goes the popular wisdom of all competitions. To that end, we present the following analysis of the various denizens of this den of Shufflepuck-mania:

***Skip Feeney***—The prototype of the mid-20th century Earth nerd. He's extremely polite, but as a player, he's a total pushover. If *this* guy can beat you, it's time to unplug the computer. His returns are feeble; in fact most players will probably lose patience waiting for the puck to get back to them *long* before they actually polish the Skipper off. Total pretender.

Player Rating (0-10): 1

***DC3***—Robot pretender. Terrible. His style is—surprise!—mechanical.

Player Rating: 2

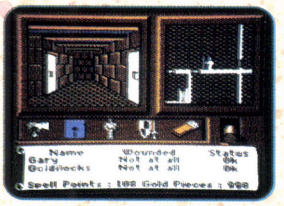
***Visine***—Visine is a nervous little dude with a paddle that flutters like a hummingbird and eyes that barely clear the top of the table. He's definitely a pretender, but his madcap play style occassionally leads to positive results, if only by accident. He's probably the best of the bad players.

Player Rating: 3

***Vinnie***—This laid-back, fur-covered space alien is a cross between Chewbacca and

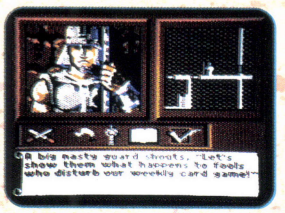
# Tangled TALES™

## Myth, Magic and Mirth

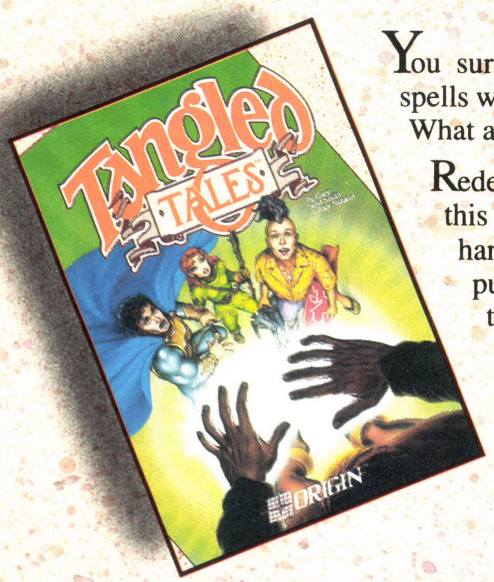



Screens shown are for Apple II.




What do a "tubed-out" California surfer, a knight in shining armor and a Shakespeare-spouting elf maiden have in common? Typically nothing! But you'll recruit this off-beat crew and meet more than 50 other peculiar characters in TANGLED TALES, the Misadventures of a Wizard's Apprentice.




You sure aren't the wizard's star pupil. In fact, he took away your spells when you spilled his precious adamantite dust on the squirrel. What a mess that turned out to be!

Redeem yourself, fill your spell book and save Violet Valley on this fractured journey where time stands still — or maybe just hangs around. It's filled with stirring combat and perplexing puzzles, and features dazzling graphics with animated illustrations, 3-D dungeons and detailed overhead views.

You've seen fantasy, role-playing and graphic adventure games before, but never one that combines myth, magic and mirth like TANGLED TALES.

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CIRCLE #154 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Maynard G. Krebbs. He's probably the worst of the good players. His serves and returns have occassional power, but his play is inconsistent. Pretender.

Player Rating: 5

***Lexan***—This affable but tipsy alien weirdo has a head that resembles an upside-down wicker urn, but he has very good taste in clothing. His game would perhaps be improved if he actually put the darned martini *down* while he plays, but he'll still give most novices an interesting game. His play is generally predictable, but he'll surprise you with an ace every once in a while. Pretender, but only marginally.

Player Rating: 6

***General Eneg***—This sinister, pig-faced contender is as reknowned for his bad temper as he is for his best shot, a screaming ricochet ace that leaves even veteran players looking like Skipper. He can be beaten, but he'll make you sweat for it.

Player Rating: 7.5

***Nerval***—If the play of this hooded, shadowy contender doesn't unnerve you, then the alternately smiling and glowering face on Nerval's stomach *definitely* will. (Occasionally, to display pleasure or frustration after a volley, Nerval pulls open its robe to reveal the horrible face there!)

Nerval is the master of angles and employs a tiny black paddle to deflect the puck in every imaginable way. Supernaturally skilled, Nerval could take the crown some day.

Player Rating: 9

***Biff Raunch***—He's big, he's strong and he shoots hard. A real alpha male type, this guy is good, but he can definitely be had. Blockers frustrate him more than Nerval or Bejin because of his bullish technique. Still, one can't argue with success, and right now, Biff the Barbarian is the champion of the cafe.

Player Rating: 9.5

***Princess Bejin***—This comely contender has the most wicked serve since Jimmy Connors in his prime—and even Jimbo couldn't make a tennis ball do the kind of things Bejin can to a puck! With a waggle of her psychokinetic finger, the princess can make the puck stop, start and even move left and right! Positively spooky. If ricochet shots are your weakness, she will be your toughest foe.

Player Rating: 10

### Mouse Technique

*Shufflepuck Cafe* will present a unique challenge to most Mac gamers. This is an extremely physical contest that could see mouses flying in all directions. The user controls the on-screen paddle by moving the mouse in the desired direction. A mouse pad is a virtual neccessity here, but users will tend to overrun even a pad while caught in the heat of play.

The best bet is to frequently lift the mouse and reposition it at the bottom of the pad. This will allow the user to push forward with maximum impact at any given time.

And that's what it looks like at the Shufflepuck Cafe. So polish up that paddle and powder down the mouse pad, because anyone who takes on the top dogs *here* is going to need every edge they can get!

**—Bill Kunkel**

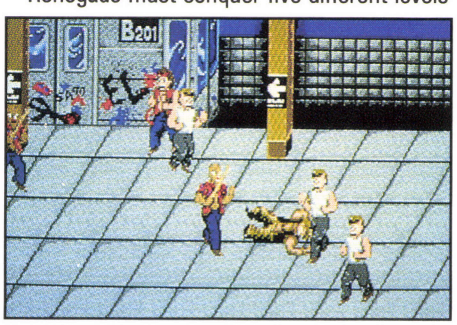
# Make the Streets Safe in Renegade

## Taito

Versions: Apple, Apple IIGS, Atari ST, Commodore 64, IBM PC

The player is the renegade in Taito's latest arcade release. His mission is a favorite theme for compu-heroes: Clean up the streets and rescue gorgeous Lucy from the ominous Mr. Big and his gang.

Renegade must conquer five different levels




in order to reclaim his lost love. Each of the five is infested with a different street gang wielding unique weapons. There are a variety of offensive moves Renegade may use to deal with his opponents. Some of these moves seem much more efficient than others. The punch, for example, is actually dangerous to use because it is only effective at very close range, and it takes two hits to knock down an opponent.

The flying kick is effective yet also dangerous. If Renegade misses, he'll land right next to or on top of his attacker, who will usually knock him down immediately. To use the flying kick effectively, make sure Renegade is on the same horizontal level as the opponent, and begin the kick when our hero is about two inches from the enemy.

The back kick seems to be the most effective of the three maneuvers for a couple of reasons. This kick will work at a greater distance than a punch, yet it also operates well at very close range. As a matter of fact, the back kick will even succeed if an opponent is right on top of Renegade. But there is another advantage to the back kick: It will connect a much higher percentage of times than the flying kick, because the opponent does not have to be on the same level as Renegade to register a hit.

If Renegade is grabbed from behind, immediately make a move left or right to elbow the attacker. If grabbed by a thug directly in front, first make an attack motion

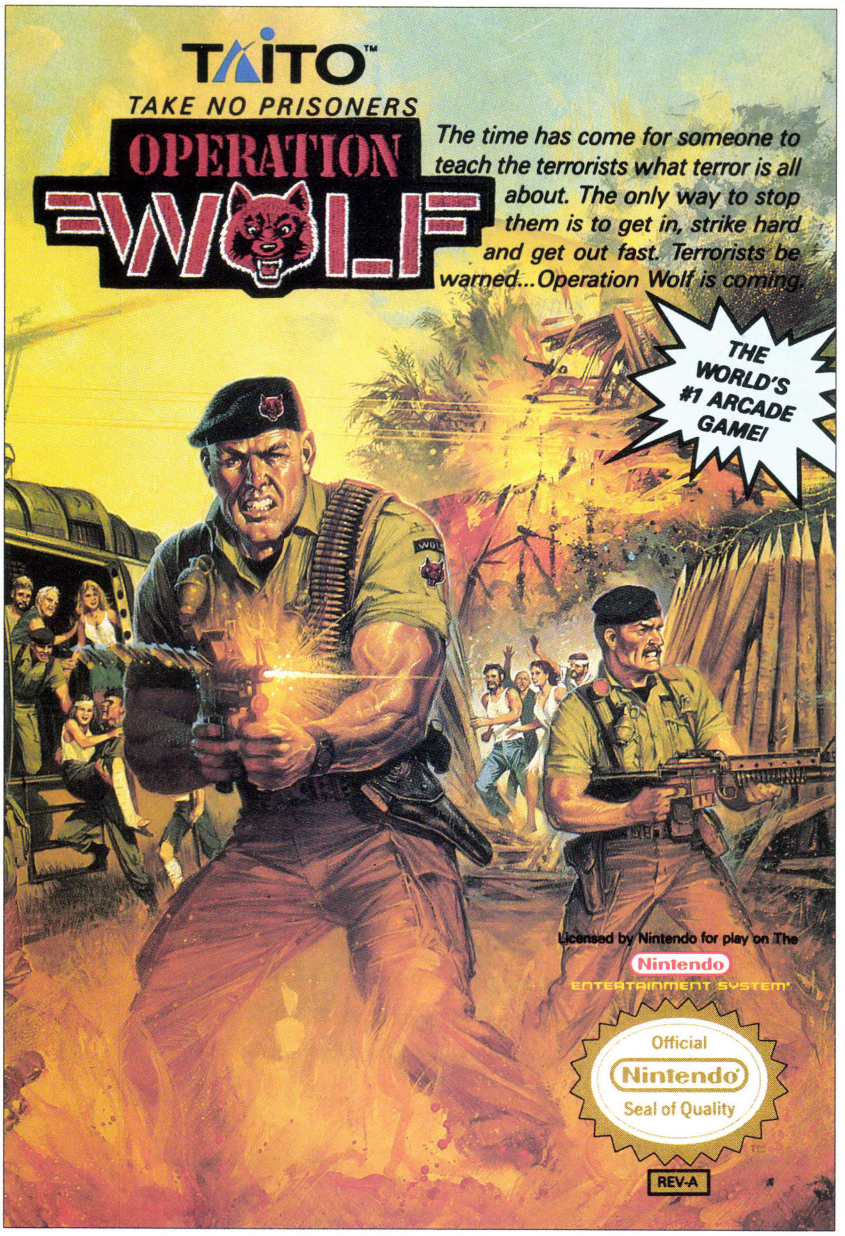



to the lower left or right to knee the oncoming thug, then elbow the rear assailant. One slight problem here is that sometimes, even though the attacker is elbowed and falls down, the game will keep Renegade stuck as if he were still being held. If this happens, use the elbow

*(continued on page 142)*

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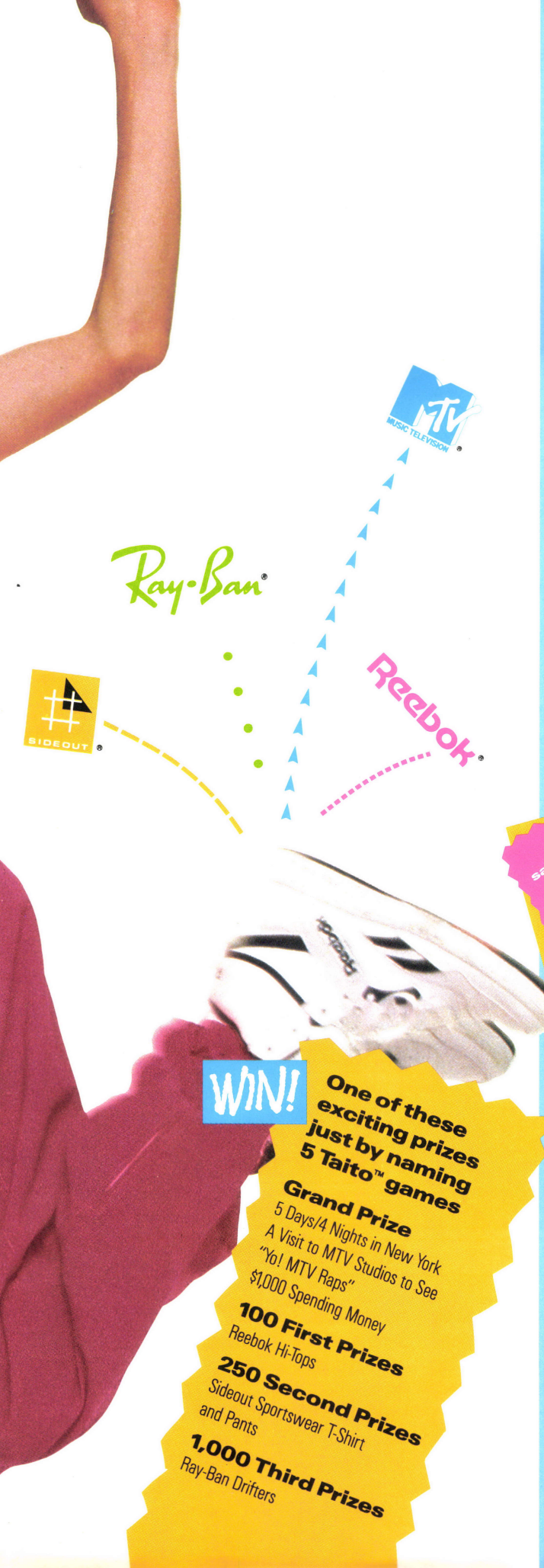
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CIRCLE #156 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

# WHERE DO THOSE IDEAS COME FROM?

by Arnie Katz

*Writer, editor, lecturer and game designer Arnie Katz knows the field from every perspective. Each month, his column takes readers inside the world of video and computer games. This time, he discusses why some ideas become games, while others never leave the notebook.*

A journalist who asks so many questions should not fear one, but I do. I begin to quiver and quake when someone asks: "Wanna hear my great idea for a video game?" The only query more likely to drain the color from my face is, "Your money or your life?"

Frankly, a gun-toting mugger is easier to handle than a friend armed with a pet game idea. The choice of purse or pelt is blindingly obvious alongside the one between hurting someone who sincerely believes he or she has the key to the next Subway Software best-seller and listening to something I do not want to hear.

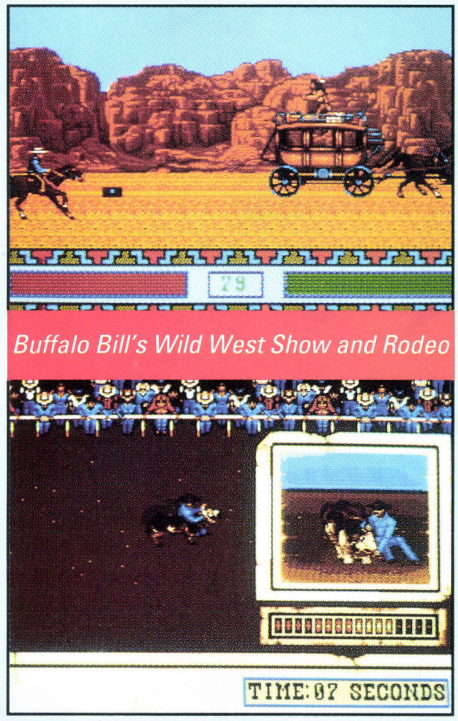
And make no mistake, game ideas are the last topic I want to discuss with anyone outside our company. No one likes to blight budding creativity, but experience has taught that allowing friends to bounce game ideas off me is a no-win situation.

Only three things can happen when a well-intentioned person offers an idea for a new game. All of them are bad:

- If the idea is flatly unusable, saying so doesn't win much love. Concepts are subjective, so it's nearly impossible to explain my judgment to someone who might not know all the ramifications of the game business. People tend to fall in love with their own ideas and don't want an outsider to burst the bubble. Some folks bear a long-standing grudge against anyone who casts aspersions on them.
- Or suppose the idea is excellent, but someone at Subway Software already thought of it. This is especially embarrassing if the concept hasn't yet advanced to the proposal stage. Truth aside, what could sound lamer than, "Oh, that's good, but I thought of it last night." That's a good way to make a new ex-friend.

Even if the suggestion duplicates a game concept Subway has already sold to a publisher, I'm not entirely off the hook. No matter what I say, the would-be helper will remember our conversation and wonder. When that game finally appears, the person can't help having at least one tiny thought that perhaps they got the shaft, instead of the gold mine.

- The final alternative is that the suggestion is both usable and totally new to me—which is the worst possible outcome of all! If I do anything with the idea, I would consider myself ethically bound to pay the concept's originator. Which brings a slight dilemma. Briefly put: exactly how much is a raw concept worth?



*Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and Rodeo*

Every game requires a good theme, true, but it is a long trek from concept to published disk. Many non-designers wrongly believe that once there is a good idea, the game is practically finished. Unfortunately, it doesn't work that way.

Starting with the world's greatest idea, Subway Software still must write a proposal that outlines every major aspect of the idea, draw storyboards and find a receptive publisher. Once a sale is clinched, we have to write 100-250 pages of specifications and revise as necessary during the implementation phase.

So, as vital as it is to start a game with a good idea, the concept ends up as a very minor component of the project taken as a whole. An offer based on its true worth might insult someone who had visions of a 50-50 split.

Since I can't pay a meaningful fee for concepts, I don't buy them. I make it a point never to use any game idea which someone has offered for sale to Subway Software. Letting a perfectly good theme sit unused is the kind of frustrating experience I like to avoid.

That's why I cringe whenever someone clears his throat to give me a game idea. Friends know better than to even raise the subject, and strangers obligingly freeze in their tracks when I scream, "No! No! No!" while waving my arms like a human windmill.

That brings up the logical question: "So, Arnie, where do good ideas come from?" A half-dozen years ago, that subject would have made this the shortest *Inside Gaming* on record. When designers of video games


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# Q. What do you get when you mix sharp graphics and sensational sound with unbeatable game play?



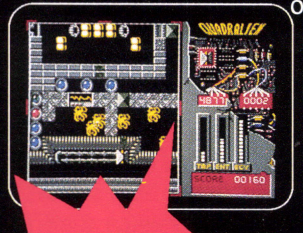




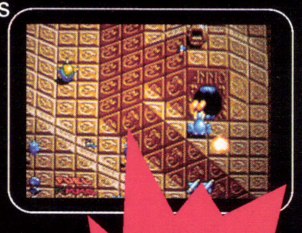
# A. Addicted.

## The hit arcade games from Europe, now available in the U.S.!

**QUADRALIEN.** The mission: Find and destroy the evil Quadraliens who have infested Cybernetic Power Station ASTRA and bring the reactor back under control. Work your way through ASTRA's nineteen chambers with only six droids (each with its own unique feature) to find and destroy the Quadralien Mother Creature. You'll need ingenuity - as well as lasers! - to fight through the aliens and maze-like corridors of ASTRA. Strategic thinking, a puzzle-solving mind, and a quick trigger-finger are all required, so take your time and plan your moves. But you'd better hurry - the temperature's rising toward a meltdown of cosmic proportions!



**STARGOOSE.** The equipment: The new top secret fighter, codename STARGOOSE, packed to the hilt with every weapon imaginable. The assignment: Steal the power crystals from the eight cities on the planet NOM. But watch out! The rolling landscape is covered with machine gun nests, laser pill boxes, automatic rocket launchers, and pre-programmed robot attack vehicles. Fuel and ammo will go like crazy, so be ready to steal more from the storage tunnels under the cities. Absorb yourself in spectacular 3D graphics, as you climb, dive, dodge and twist your way along the alien landscape. The aliens await your attack. Come back with the jewels or don't come back at all!



"...very absorbing game play...sharp graphics, great background music..." ACE magazine

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needed a new idea, they knew just what to do: Grab a bunch of quarters and visit the nearest arcade.

Swiping ideas from the family amusement centers was no clandestine act, either. In view of the industry's current sensitivity about software piracy, it is interesting to note its past indifference toward flagrant idea thievery. Interviews with software designers/programmers often contained references to the specific arcade games they pillaged for their latest creations.



*Ringling Brothers Circus Games*

Controversy surrounds copyright protection for electronic games. During the last decade, it has proven hard to invoke the law to safeguard video and computer programs. Unless the culprit is careless enough to steal the whole thing virtually unchanged, the courts are seldom knowledgeable enough to confirm the charges and provide judicial relief from rip-off artists.

Whether due to stronger enforcement or loftier ethics, this is no longer the favored method for acquiring concepts. The connections between the coin-op and home markets are so numerous that licensing has superseded "borrowing" in most cases.

Like most other creative people, designers depend more on dogged persistence than inspiration. Good ideas sometimes strike when least expected, but most of the best are methodically culled from lesser possibilities in a continuing quest for game-worthy notions.

There is no pat formula for generating successful concepts. A game designer simply channels the creative energy to games which other artists turn toward paintings or poems.

Doesn't that sound mystifyingly metaphysical? I thought it read a lot better than,"We shriek ideas at each other until one of us drowns out the other two." Both are true. If I could explain the transformation of a bunch of facts into an artistic production, our editor would add "philosopher and sage" to the introduction that began this column.

Brainstorming with my partners, Bill Kunkel and Joyce Worley, yields more new ideas than any other approach. There's actually more than one type of design meeting, depending on whether it is a free-form quest for concepts or a tightly targeted search for a specific type of contest.

Unfortunately, brainstorming does not come with a money-back guarantee. Sometimes, it's a lot of tumult and shouting over practically nothing. The worst part is that there's no way to tell how the session's going until it's over! One night's golden concept can look like tarnished brass in the clear light of the next morning.

How erratic are these skull sessions? Well, one three-hour burst at a Consumer Electronics Show gave us *Ringling Brothers Circus Games* (Box Office), *Mat Mogul* (Capstone), *Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and Rodeo* (TyneSoft) and several other marketable ideas which can't be discussed. One evening of intense work kept Bill, Joyce and I busy for many months.

On the other hand, we once spent an evening on a notion which began its stunted life as *Hitler in the Alps on Skis*. We knew it had no commercial potential, but we couldn't resist the challenge of concocting a marketable game about the most detestable man in history.

Like three moths caught by a headlight, we became helpless prisoners of our own creativity. In a mania, we reworked it to *Hitler Saves the World*. In this demented adventure, the computerist becomes Adolf Hitler. A time-traveling freedom fighter whisks him to a future dominated by super-Nazis. Hitler's puny physique brands him an undesirable and forces him to fight against this tyranny of tomorrow. When the fever ebbed, we gave this atrocious idea a simple burial at sea, courtesy of the bathroom toilet.

The most innovative themes come from brainstorming, but these ideas are frequently the hardest to sell. A dozen companies passed on *MicroLeague WWF Wrestling* (MLSA for IBM PC, Amiga, Atari ST and Commodore 64) before Paul Kelly, then-vice-president of MLSA, saw the potential of a strategy contest with digitized images of Hulk Hogan and other ring stars.

Meetings with software publishers are a surprisingly fertile source of ideas. Nothing unleashes my powers of imagination like a do-or-die chance for a quick sale. The stimulation of nonstop shop talk can do miraculous things. Intense meetings can produce a peculiar mental state in which games seem to write themselves across my brain in flaming pixels. It's an exhilarating, if brief, feeling. Now, if I could get a thought-activated word processor for those rare moments...

Our agent, Barry Friedman of the International Computer Group, is another important source of concepts. He has a knack for finding open niches and assembling creative and marketing teams to fill them. It's not a "sure thing," like an assignment from a publisher, but ICG projects have a way of turning out artistically satisfying and financially rewarding.

Getting a concept on a platter from a publisher lies at the other extreme from conjuring one out of thin air. Several companies have approached Subway Software with a license already in hand. That's what happened with *Superman: Man of Steel* (Tynesoft/ Capstone for most computers) and *Star Trek: First Contact* (Simon & Schuster for most computers).

The hardest thing about inventing a concept for a license is pleasing its owners. Some companies, like Paramount, are tough but fair. They won't approve anything that doesn't accurately mirror the original material, but they are quick to approve a good job.

Popular culture is the raw material. Every fad doesn't instantly convert into a playable game, but it's a place to start. Any theme that captures the fancy of a sizable portion of the public's eye may have something that can serve as the skeleton of another game.

Next month, I'll continue this discussion of game ideas with my picks for the ten most significant video and computer games of all time. See you all then!

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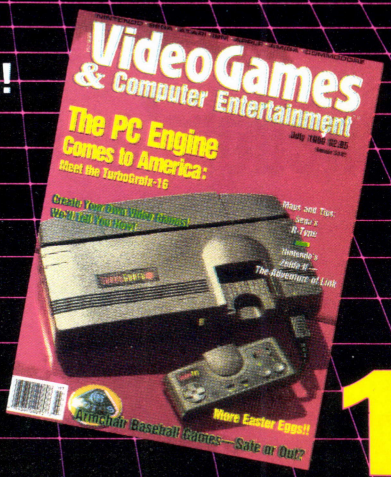
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# Gamedom's Answer Man Tells All!

by The Game Doctor

The questioning masses are gathering at my door, so let's get right down to the business of calming gamedom's fevered brow.

**Q: It seems that every ad I read for computer games describes the best graphics and best sounds. I am considering buying some sort of entertainment computer system. Could you please shed some light as far as graphics and sounds are concerned? Also, would this apply to an IBM on a big-screen TV?**

—Ron Schulz
Scotts, MI

**A:** I want you to know I brought in a consultant on this case, Ron: Jim Nangano, head honcho of Up Front Software, who gave me a quick briefing on the color and resolution question. I'll deal with sound later.

The C-64 offers 16 colors and a maximum resolution of 320×200. The Atari ST, in low resolution mode, also offers a maximum 320×200, with 16 colors from a palette of 256. The Amiga boasts 640×200 resolution and 32 colors from a palette of 496. The IBM PC, in EGA mode, has 16 colors and a 640×200 resolution.

I suspect this raw data is somewhat confusing. Certainly, games on the ST look better than games on the C-64, yet the graphic capabilities seem identical. Not so. The big difference is color distribution. At maximum res (320×200), the C-64 is limited to two colors in an 8×8 pixel grid. In the 160×200 mode, that is doubled to four colors. The ST, meanwhile, is not limited in its application of colors, and so games on that system have a vibrant quality due to the lavish use of those colors.

Soundwise, the C-64 remains a limited system due to its use of the SID chip, which must attempt to recreate sounds and music within a limited palette. The ST's onboard sound chip is also years past state of the art, but the computer's ability to use digitized sound effects and music help compensate. The ST also has a built-in MIDI port which opens up additional possibilities in terms of musical capabilities.

The IBM PC is a problem. The only audio comes from a tiny, on-board speaker which can be supplemented by speaker systems (such as Covox's *Speech Thing*) or sound boards, such as the Ad Lib and Roland boards. Sound boards produce significantly improved audio but they are also expensive, while speakers amplify, but do not significantly enhance audio output. (For a more detailed look at the available audio peripherals for computers, VG&CE will be running a major article on this subject in an upcoming issue.)

Disregarding resolution, color capabilities, audio parameters and all that stuff, and going by expert eye and ear alone, the Doc will now offer his own personal ratings on the top home computers:

- The Amiga represents the top of the line in terms of sound *and* graphics with a 10 out of 10 in both categories.
- An IBM with VGA and a Roland or Ad Lib sound board gets a 9.5 for graphics and a 9 for sound (music is great but sound effects are often abrasive).
- An IBM with EGA and no sound enhancement rates an 8 on graphics and a 3 on sound.
- The Atari ST gets high marks for graphics—a solid 9—but falls to a 6.5 for sound.
- Finally, the C-64 rates a 6 for graphics and a 6 for sound.

And if you think I'm going to compare video-game systems now, forget it! I've got other patients to see right now.

**Q: I would like to know who I would contact if I have an idea for a video game. I do have confidence in my idea. I firmly believe this is going to be a number-one arcade smash. If they were to accept my idea, what would be the price range they'd buy it for?**

—Jason T. Haynes
Irvington, KY

**Q: I would like to become a video-game designer. I have hundreds of ideas for games. I was wondering if you knew of any good, recent books that tell you how to design, make or program video or computer games.**

—Kyle Wilcoxen
Olathe, KS

**A:** The number of petitioners with video-game and computer ideas swells with each new batch of mail. It is important to realize, however, that "having an idea," even if it is the most singularly brilliant concept since *Pong*, is unlikely to result in a major financial windfall or,

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# QUESTION & ANSWER

for that matter, even a sale. Very few publishers are interested in "ideas" or "concepts." Not to denigrate your ideas, but gamers who believe they have the next great game-design idea are as common as moviegoers who feel they could direct the greatest film ever made or TV viewers who believe they have the next *All in the Family* or *Dallas* percolating on their back burner.

Publishers are interested in two forms of submission: design specs and programming samples. A design spec is anywhere from five to a dozen pages, which details the nature, play mechanic and visual presentation of your game idea. Publishers greatly prefer to actually *see* the game you are proposing, so a disk with even a non-interactive demo of the basic playfield will almost certainly get you a hearing.

As for tutorials on the subject of designing games, the closest thing the Doc knows of is Chris Crawford's excellent *Journal of Computer Game Design*, which is published on a bimonthly basis. This newsletter is nothing special to look at, but many of the leading designers and programmers contribute to it on a regular basis. This is heavy stuff, folks, but for serious would-be designers, it is all but indispensable. A subscription costs $30 a year from 5251 Sierra Road, San Jose, CA 95132. There are dozens of books available on the subject of programming, and the latest innovations are generally discussed in the various system magazines (such as our sister publication ST-LOG). Be sure to read this month's *Inside Gaming* for more about game ideas.

**Q: After reading your column in past issues of VG&CE I was glad to see that there is finally someone out there who is able to answer my questions on video gaming.**

**What I've been wondering is, with all the commotion concerning NEC's TurboGrafx-16 and Sega's Genesis, reviewers have neglected to mention any "next generation" game system from Nintendo.**

**Rumor has it that a "Super Famicon" was just released in Japan. I realize that it takes time for an American version to be made, but what's the problem? Nintendo's own game counselors won't even give me a "yes" or "no" answer. Are there no thoughts of bringing out a system that would be able to compete with these new machines on a 16-bit level?**

—John Oles
Wrentham, MA

**A:** Yes, John, there *is* a 16-bit Nintendo system, but I wouldn't hold my breath waiting for it on this side of the Pacific. Nintendo obviously believes that there's still life in the original NES and is reluctant to introduce the next generation system at this time. Since Nintendo isn't even *talking* about a 16-bit system at this time, I would say it is all but impossible that this "Super NES" will reach these shores before mid- to late-1990 and, if Nintendo gets its way, maybe not even then.

*Last Licks:*

•We've got a special reader request from Leward Bourda Jr. who is trying to recall the name of a coin-op game he played back in 1983. According to Leward, the player-character resembles a monkey and faces off against Count Dracula, the Frankenstein monster and a chameleonlike character. The monsters are defeated through the use of rods, which must first be touched by light in order to be activated. The Doc even went so far as to consult with Roger Sharpe, coin-op expert, author of the definitive volume on pinball machines and currently director of marketing with Williams. Roger thought the game idea sounded superficially like *Wacko*, a Bally coin-op from that era. There were also similarities to a pair of Sega games, *Congo Bongo* and *Monster Bash*. So let us know, Leward: was it one of these? Perhaps one of our readers is already nodding with recognition and can help us out here. . .

•Chris Purviance, phone home! The Doc has located a source for Vectrex game cartridges! Send me a stamped, self-addressed envelope, and I'll get the information right out to you.

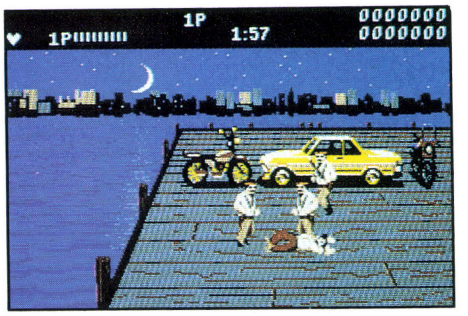
•James and Rhea Meurer are *still* having trouble booting software using the *V-Max* fastload program—and no, they *don't* have another fastload cartridge in their C-64, so I lose that bet. I'll try to get this one worked out by next issue, folks!

Speaking of next issue, if you'd like to see *your* question asked and (we hope) answered, send it, along with any comments you might have, to: *The Game Doctor*, P.O. Box 020-541, Brooklyn, NY 11202, and I'll see you all then!

*(continued from page 130)*

or jump move to free Renegade.

The last move can be the most important of the game. The crouch punch is used to hit a floored attacker. Although it's a dirty move, it's the key to survival. On these streets Renegade will find it next to impossible to knock down the gang leader in the allotted time using only kicks and punches. Instead, hit him with a kick and immediately position Renegade with his knees over the thug's stomach area. The game is a bit fickle here and will land a crouch punch only if Renegade is in this area. Once positioned, hit the button and watch the leader's energy level rapidly decrease. If it does not, Renegade is not positioned correctly, and the player should move out of there immediately. If Renegade does not move in time, the leader will get up and knock our hero down before he can respond.




### A Word on the Levels

Level 1 is pretty straightforward. Simply fight hand-to-hand and remember to take out the thugs wielding weapons first.

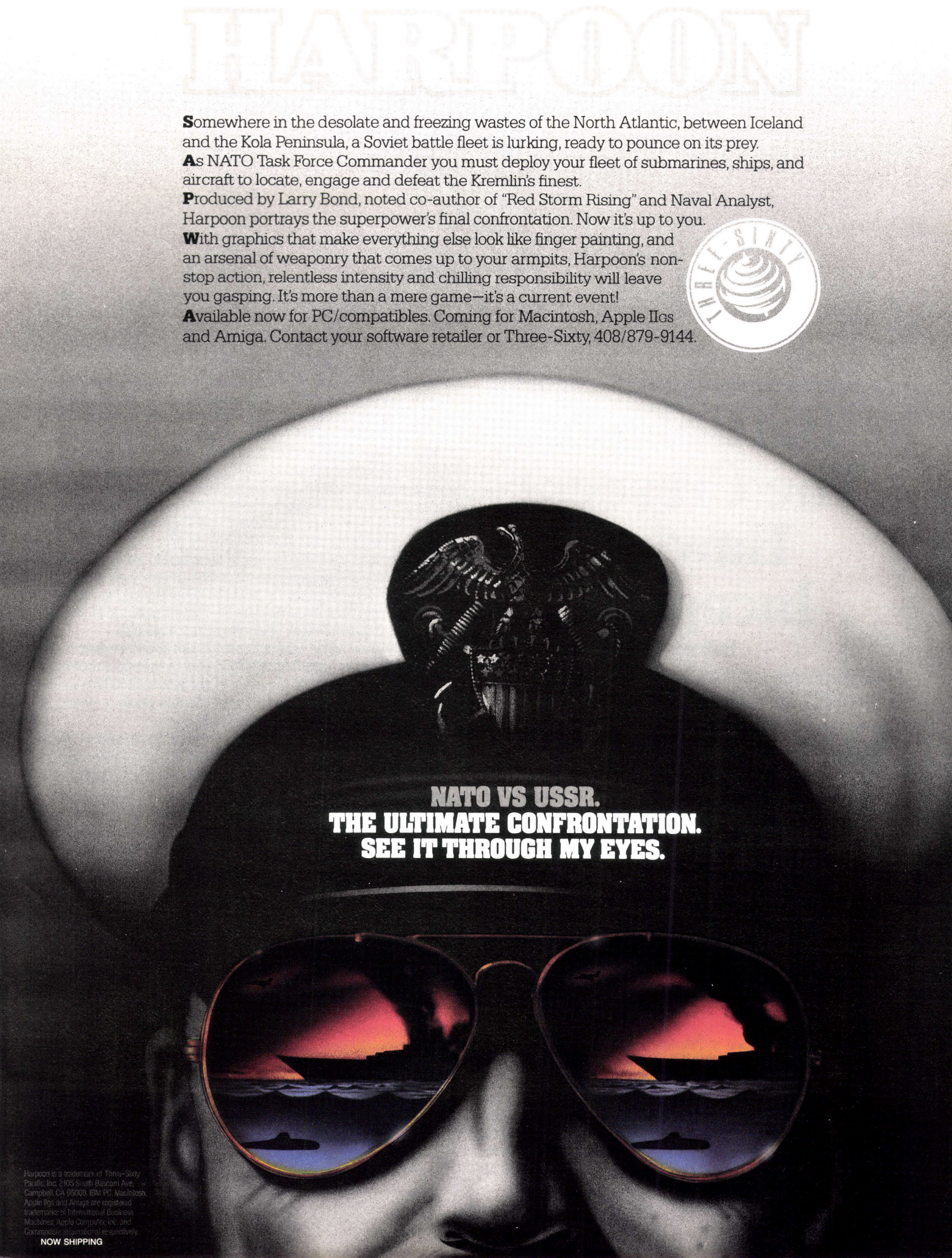
At the start of Level 2, the street gang comes at Renegade on motorcycles and attempts to run him down. The secret here is to get on the same horizontal level as a bike, run at it and use the flying kick about one inch before Renegade hits the front wheel. This knocks the attacker off the bike. Once they're all dethroned, the game proceeds in a manner similar to Level 1.

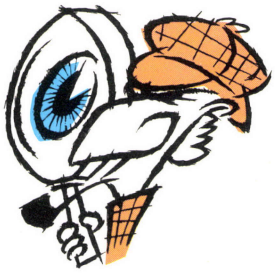
The women on Level 3 carry whips which have a slightly longer range than the nunchucks; otherwise, everything is the same. Level 4's gang is a bit tricky because they come out three at a time and attempt to surround Renegade. Here, our hero must keep moving and use the back kick to take out the guys who try to sneak up from behind.

Level 5 is actually not as bad as Level 4. Just remember to use the back kick wherever possible. Once you down Mr. Big, don't waste time. Immediately jump on him, and pound his ugly lights out.

—F.T.


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# BattleTech: The Crescent Hawk's Inception

## Infocom

Versions: Amiga ($49.95), Apple II ($49.95), Atari ST ($49.95), Commodore 64 ($39.95), IBM PC ($49.95)

War is a way of life in the 31st century society of *BattleTech: The Crescent Hawk's Inception*. Five powerful houses are locked in a struggle for control of the Star League in this science-fiction role-playing game derived from the *BattleTech* universe that has inspired countless comic books, cartoons, nonelectronic games and other licensed spin-offs.

As Jason Youngblood, the scion of a proud and noble family, the player assumes the duties and challenge of a MechWarrior cadet. Although Jason starts the adventure with little more than good health, a fine pedigree and 50 credits, he gains competence through training and experience.

During *BattleTech*, Jason learns to control the BattleMechs, undertakes training missions with the 30-foot-tall fighting robots and, finally, defends the House of Steiner from attack by the House of Kurita. It isn't nearly as hard to master as some of Infocom's older text epics, but most gamers are apt to find it a lot more exciting to play.

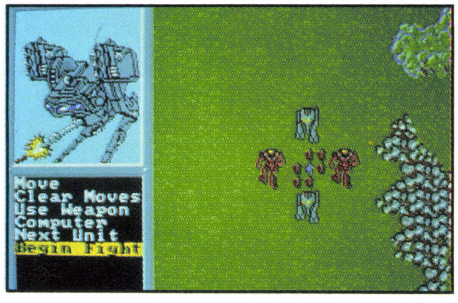
The main display screen of this menu-driven RPG is sectioned into thirds. The large area on the right shows a modified overhead-perspective view of the character and immediately surrounding territory. The usual color illustration is sometimes replaced by text describing encounters or the special map. The latter is automatically created by the program during the course of the game and shows a much more extensive territory in somewhat limited detail.

The upper left-hand window's main function is to keep track of movement and other activities. It indicates the direction Jason has traveled in each of the last few turns and reports the blow-by-blow progress of every battle. As in most Infocom products, there is a choice of three levels of description, ranging from lengthy exposition of every nuance of combat to a terse report of the outcome of the fight. Sometimes drawings replace this purely textual output. During movement, non-animated color illustrations give close-ups of major points of interest. Periodically, *Manga*-like non-interactive, animated sequences of futuristic warfare pop up between rounds of fighting to enhance this phase's visual impact.

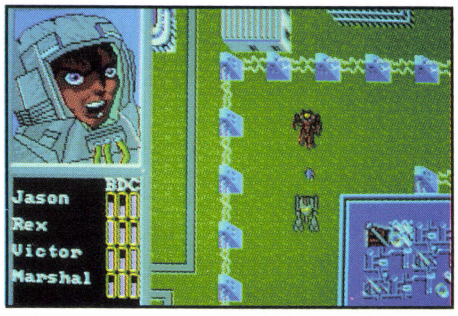
The *Manga* interludes, like the rest of the artwork, are quite good, though the battle scenes grow repetitive after several runs through the adventure. Fortunately, the Westwood Associates design team lets the user regulate the frequency of the intrusions. It is even possible to skip the comic-book stuff altogether, if desired.

The lower-left window summarizes important character data, including bar graphs of Jason's three basic attributes: body, dexterity and charisma, in addition to the state of the hero's bank balance. The adventurer picks "Inspect Character" from a menu to obtain a fuller description of any character in the party.

Jason's performance is partially governed by seven second attributes. Gunnery and piloting, the main talents needed to control a BattleMech, are stressed, but there are advantages to studying




Piloting your BattleMech robot, you can use the selection menu to help you defend the House of Steiner from the rival House of Kurita.




Infocom, recognized more for their text-based adventures, has brought a graphic game to the computer with *Battletech: The Crescent Hawk's Inception*.

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bow, blade, pistol, rifle, medicals and technicals.

The control system is unusually flexible. For most brands of home computers, the player can choose among a controller-activated scheme and two keyboard-oriented setups. The controller (or the numeric keypad) governs movement. The user highlights and confirms selections from menus to instruct Jason to carry out other commands.

The documentation covers the play mechanics adequately, but it can only offer a sliver of the rich tapestry already created for the *BattleTech* universe. There is enough information to understand the broad outline of this world, but not enough to make it truly come alive for the gamer. Those who want to get more out of the game might want to check out the *Comico* comic-book series.

Infocom has shucked its stodgy image with more action and better graphics, but the publisher may have aimed above the heads of its potential audience. The RPG could prove too sophisticated for the youngest BattleTechies, though veterans of Infocom's earlier text adventures should not have much trouble finishing it.

*BattleTech: The Crescent Hawk's Inception* is more entertaining and accessible than anything Infocom has released in the last two years. It is recommended to those who have already visited the 31st century in other media, and it is also worth a look by anyone who dotes on combat-heavy science-fiction adventures.

**—Arnie Katz**

**Mediagenic, 3885 Bohannon Dr., Menlo Park, CA 94025; (415) 329-0500.**

# SimCity

## Maxis

Versions: Amiga ($44.95), Commodore 64 ($29.95), IBM PC ($49.95), Macintosh ($49.95)

The best games are often those which break from previous themes for a totally new gaming experience. This is certainly true for Maxis' *SimCity*, where the player is elected mayor of a city of his own creation. Turning a small town into a thriving metropolis is quite a task, and it quickly engrosses the player in the life of his own community.

The player chooses one of the fixed scenarios or starts a city from scratch. Building a new city requires a decision about its placement. Possible sites are presented one at a time until an acceptable location is chosen, and the game begins.

The main goal of the mayor is to get simulated people, or sims, to move to the city. To accomplish this, the mayor must zone the land, construct various municipal buildings, build roads and mass transport and provide a power grid for the entire operation. Zoning the land is the most important aspect of the game. Three principle types of zones exist: residential, where the sims live; commercial, where they shop; and industrial, where they produce goods for export. If and when these elements are in proper balance, the city attracts new residents.

In any town, a zone is pretty useless unless it is connected to both the power grid and the road network. Both cost a significant portion of the city's revenue to operate, so care must be taken to lay them out in the most efficient manner. The power grid is supplied by one or more power plants, either nuclear or coal. Though a nuclear plant costs more and risks a meltdown, it powers three times the number of zones as a coal plant.

While this could be the extent of the player's involvement, many more options are available. Once the zones and their interconnecting grids are set up, the sims begin to move in, build up the areas and clog the roads. Just as in real life, it may become necessary to bulldoze an extremely busy road section to replace it with high-speed rail. The sims have their own criminal element, so police stations must be constructed to keep crime down. Fire stations can be constructed to limit the damage of raging fires or prevent them altogether. Sports stadiums, seaports and airports can also be constructed to increase the city's growth. In fact the sims may actually demand these facilities at certain points, moving away if they are not provided.

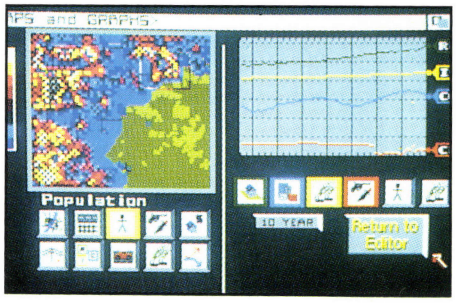
All this is challenging enough and even a little exciting, but where would we be without a tragedy now and then? Periodically, disasters occur in the city. Seaside areas may flood, a tornado or fire may strike or Godzilla may even attack. Each is triggered by a different set of conditions, and some occur randomly.

Money is vitally important. A player begins with between $5,000 and $20,000 depending on the difficulty level selected. Each action costs money, and this pool is only replenished by revenues from city taxes. Lowering taxes from the initial rate can increase town growth, but also decreases city revenues. Increasing taxes, while providing an initial boost in income, can cause the sims to flee in droves, quickly emptying the city.

Several different windows are used during game play. The maps window shows an overview of the entire city. From here, the mayor can examine many aspects of his city's growth. These range from a simple portrayal of the road network to a color-coded view of the city's growth areas (on computers capable of displaying them) to the effective areas of police and fire coverage. The editor window shows a close-up view of the current section of the city viewed and can be freely scrolled about. It is here that actual zoning and construction is performed.

The graphs window provides a look at how the city has done over the last decade or century. Graphs show the growth in the various primary zones, the levels of crime and pollution, as well as actual city revenues. The budget window allows the mayor to set the city's economics for the upcoming year. His Honor can view projected or actual income, then allocate funds to the police, fire and transportation departments.

The graphics in every version of *SimCity* take advantage of the host machine's capability. The exact layout of each window varies with each machine but is basically consistent and easy to understand. The primary information is shown in the center of the window and takes up the most room, while any legends and available options are displayed along the edges.

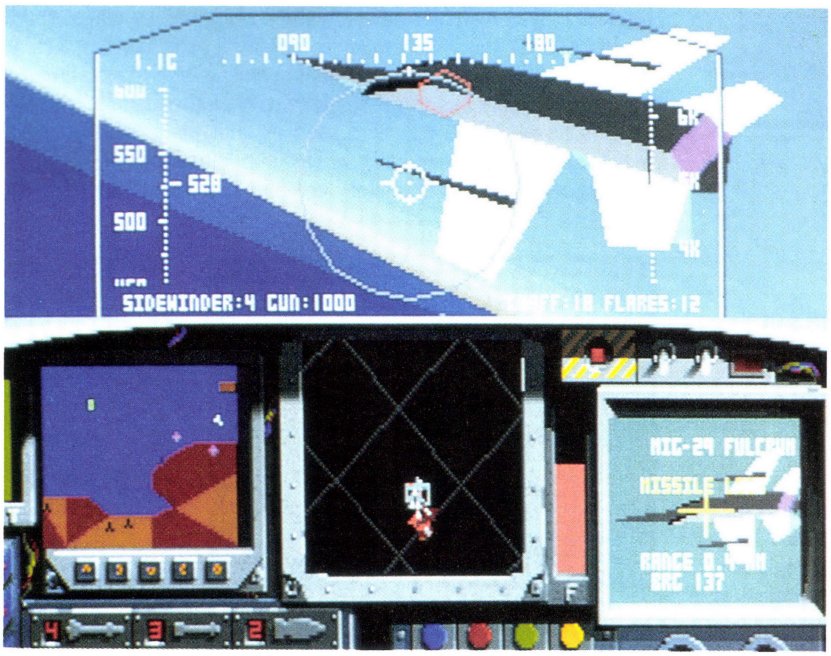


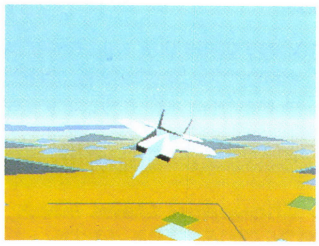

Building a city from scratch is no easy task, but Maxis' *SimCity* simplifies the process of becoming mayor.

In addition to the design-your-own scenario, *SimCity* comes with eight preset cities complete with imminent disasters. These really test a player's ability and should only be attempted by experienced users.

The manual not only explains the details of game play, but also

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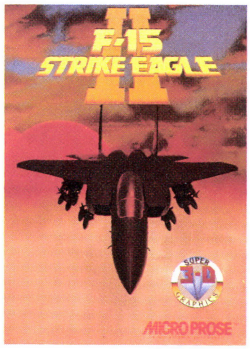
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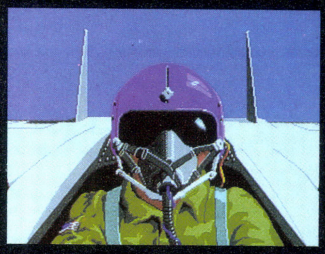
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goes into some of the ideas behind successful city building in the real world. A few more examples of game play and some more background on exactly how the sims make decisions would have been helpful, but sufficient information is provided for successful play.

*SimCity* is an extremely rich product. Being the mayor of your own city, once reserved to a special few, is now open to nearly anyone with a computer, and the experience is truly thrilling.

**—R. Bradley Andrews**

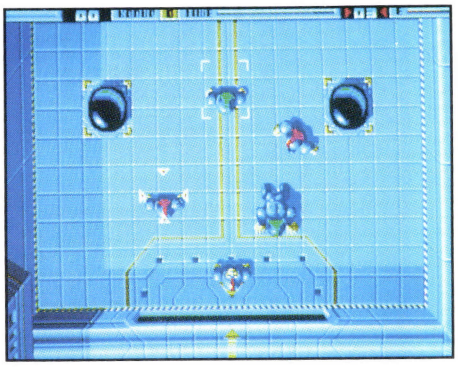
**Maxis Software, 953 Mountain View Drive, Suite #113, Lafayette, CA 94549; (415) 376-6434.**

# Speedball

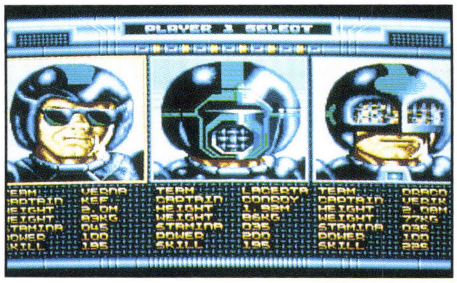
## Spotlight Software

Versions: Amiga ($39.95), Atari ST ($39.95), Commodore 64 ($29.95), IBM PC ($39.95)

Spotlight Software, a new label from Cinemaware, gets off to a rousing start with the release of *Speedball*. This excellent British action game from Mirrorsoft and the Bitmap Brothers is a pseudo-sport of the future in which teams of roughnecks clad in spiked body armor contest over a metal ball. The object is to put said ball in the opposing team's net. Reminiscent of field hocky played by gladiators, *Speedball* is an impressive, fast-action contest.



Similar to the movie *Rollerball*, *Speedball* pits one team of toughs against another in a vicious hockey-like game.




*Speedball* lets you set up teams and leagues or even sway the officials with a monetary palm greasing.

The user first selects one of the three available franchises then works to build that team into a phalanx of unstoppable monsters. This is accomplished by picking up power tokens that sporadically appear on the court. At the end of each play session, those coins can be spent on anything from toughening up one's team to buying off officials.

*Speedball* is played on a fascinating court: a walled, metal arena with a floor comprised of glass bubbles and blue tiles, a net at either end and a pair of facing doorways along the center walls. Passing the steel speedball into one doorway causes it to emerge shortly thereafter from the other, making for some intriguing strategic possibilities. At the start of the game or after a goal is scored, players line up near center court, where a turret emerges containing the steel speedball. The turret then spins like a roulette wheel and randomly releases the ball, precipitating a free-for-all as both five-player squads battle for possession.

*Speedball* offers *extremely* impressive graphics. Action is displayed from a top-down perspective, with each detail of the court skillfully rendered. Even in Tandy mode, this is a slick-looking game, and the Amiga and ST versions are quite beautiful. The players, ball and arena are all rendered with a glistening realism that greatly enhances the overall experience. More impressive than the game's look, however, is its play. The ball is passed or shot instantly, and players move up and down the court at realistic speeds, even in the IBM version, without the annoying lag time that mars most MS-DOS games.




*Speedball* represents the first title by Cinemaware's new label, Spotlight Software.

The game even offers a league option. Eleven teams compete for the championship, with the length of the season dictated by the computerist. Once the schedule is created, complete statistics are provided after each game.

*Speedball* is a superior action-strategy game of a type not previously available to owners of IBM PC computers. Sports fans, science-fiction mavens and general lovers of mayhem will definitely want to check this out.

**—Bill Kunkel**

**Spotlight Software, 4165 Thousand Oaks Blvd., Westlake Village, CA 91362; (805) 495-6515.**

# Sentinel Worlds I

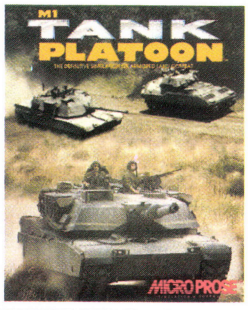
## Electronic Arts

Versions: Commodore 64 ($49.95), IBM PC ($49.95)

*Sentinel Worlds I*, a colossal interplanetary graphics adventure with a science-fiction theme, created for Electronic Arts by Future Magic, is an outstanding product of the group approach to software. The game was designed and programmed by Karl Buiter, the splashy graphics are by Michael Kosaka and the sophisticated music and sound effects are by Dave Warhol. These separate parts combine into an entertaining, engaging contest—though it's not without its rough spots.

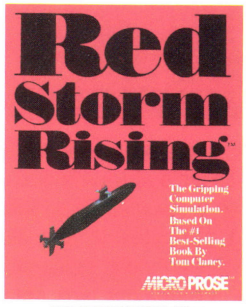
# The first, best and last name in combat simulations.



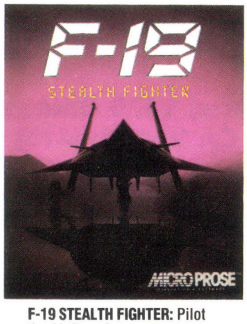



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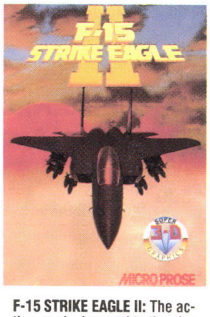
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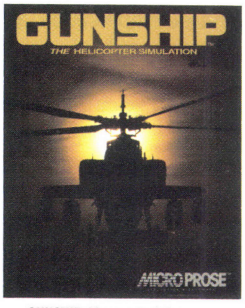

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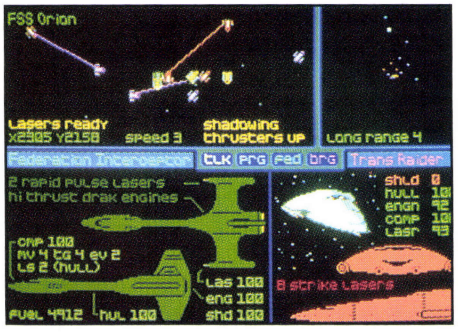
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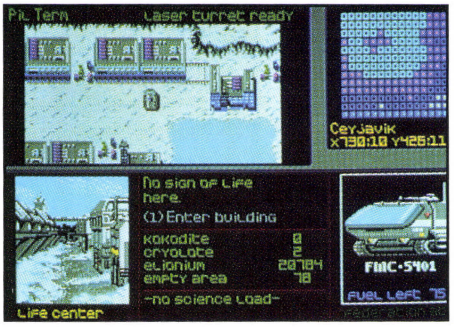
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In Electronic Arts' *Sentinel Worlds*, you start off with a rookie crew, but experience is a good teacher for future combat.




As captain of the USS *Orion*, you take your five crew members into heated battles in outer space.




As you fly through the cosmos, you search for various items that can be used for your benefit or sold.

The gamer takes on a serious role: command of the USS *Orion*, a spaceship capable of traveling among the game's various planets. There are five crew members, selected from a pictorial database, with varying attributes in key elements of the game including strength and dexterity and battle skills with certain weapons, among other things. Promotions are granted and additional skill points awarded as the player accrues experience in battle. The player then assigns these points to weapons and communication abilities for future battles.

The action starts when the USS *Orion* is dropped from the mothership, and the crew members are awakened from their frozen slumber. (It is apparent that the movies *Aliens* and *Star Wars* both had influence on the game design.) The mission is to protect interplanetary shipments which are frequently attacked, but the player soon realizes that his ship is vastly underpowered in both engines and weaponry for fighting the raiders. The first step in the adventure is to beef up the ship's propulsion, weapon and computer systems, before any real battles may commence.

The crew members are inexperienced greenhorns at the beginning of an adventure. Their skills improve with each space battle, but much of the game also involves hand-to-hand combat. The player manually assigns each crew member a weapon selected from the armory to employ in the next combat. Otherwise, the crew member is foolish enough to fight with his bare fists, even though a good auto-pistol hangs at his side. Not only is the ship underpowered, but the crew members are also.

Money is accumulated by science missions and tedious mining operations. Items found in some of the adventures and not specifically used for battle can be sold for additional funds. With enough money in hand, after refueling and repairing the ship, more advanced weapons and protective flak jackets are important acquisitions.

Raider ships may be obliterated or disabled and boarded. When planetside or on foot aboard a raider ship, the top half of the display shows an overhead view of the five crew members, as well as the immediate area of hallways, doors and opponents. This very impressive effect is superimposed on a first-person view of the area.

The player controls which crew member is in the lead and selects the target; all others fire at will. This isn't a simple blastathon, as the player must keep a close eye on hit points and rotate a different member to the front when the point man is severely damaged. Hand-to-hand combat controls are a bit awkward, and it seems that outcomes are based more on experience and skill levels of the crew members than the player's manual dexterity. It takes a lot of play time to accumulate these powers, and this makes the game-save feature vital.

When a crew member dies, it requires a trip back to one of the planets' recruitment centers and costs valuable experience points to get a replacement. The game ends when all of the original five crew members meet their death.

Many key locations are revealed only by characters in the game. Interaction does not use a parser, as in most adventure games. Instead, a sequence of questions is presented and one of several may be chosen, until all lines of conversation are exhausted. Sometimes the answer refers the player to the "paragraphs," a hint book provided with the game.

*Sentinel Worlds I* is so sophisticated that it's difficult to master the basic game-play elements. More time is spent learning how to play *Sentinel Worlds I* than is required in most adventure games. The game is so large, with so many different places to discover and explore, it's almost overwhelming. The manual leaves a bit more to the player's discovery than it should, especially since there are so many activities to control. The player graphically explores space, spaceships, planets, caves, buildings and more; manages the five crew members; fights; navigates the spaceship; drives the ATV; and does battle on foot.

Also, the manual does not make it clear that the command keys change their meaning based on the player's position or other specific conditions in the game. This is where the frustration comes in. Once past these hurdles, game play goes rather smoothly.

*Sentinel Worlds I* is an expansive, unique science-fiction adventure, a captivating game for the player ready to invest the time to master its controls.

**—Matthew J. W. Ratcliff**

**Electronic Arts, 1820 Gateway Drive, San Mateo, CA 94404; (415) 571-7171.**

# Titan

## Titus

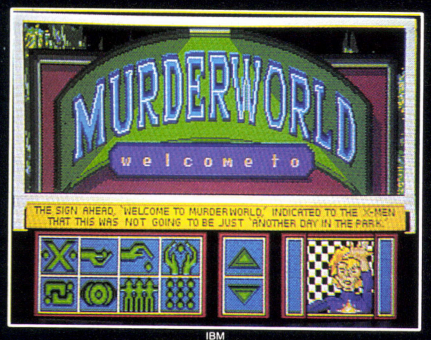
Versions: Amiga ($44.95), Atari ST ($44.95), Commodore 64 ($39.95), IBM PC ($44.95), Macintosh ($44.95)

The civilization that dominates the 22nd century has become obsessed with a deadly contest called *Titan*. Invented in Vegapolis in the year 2114, *Titan* is a crowd-pleaser despite (or perhaps because of) its killer reputation. Just how deadly

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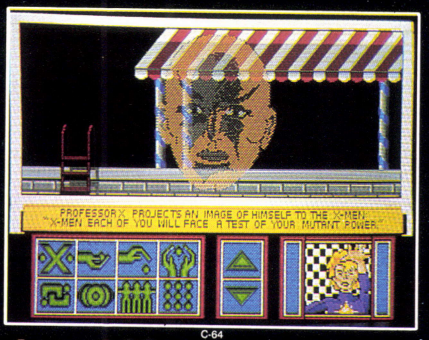
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PARAGON SOFTWARE

Spider-Man now available for C-64 ($34.95) and IBM-PC/Tandy/compatibles ($44.95); due in Aug. 1989 for Amiga. X-Men due in Oct. 1989 for IBM-PC/Tandy/compatibles ($39.95), future releases for C-64 and Amiga. Can't find these games? Call: 301-771-1151 X-208 weekdays 8:30am to 5pm Eastern and order by MC/Visa/AmEx. Or mail check or money order. Prices include shipping in US. Add $5.00 for international orders. US funds only. MD residents add 5% sales tax. Allow 1-3 weeks for US delivery. Price may vary by machine type.

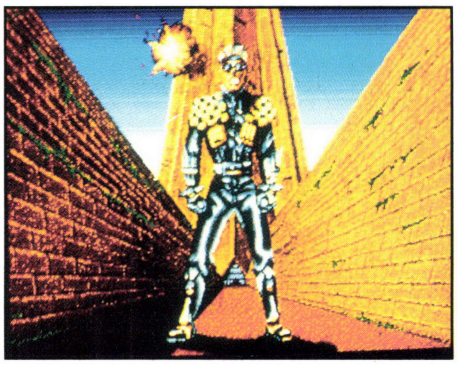
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CIRCLE #166 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

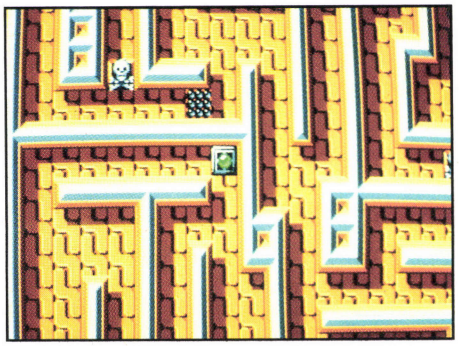
is this gargantuan game, whose name reflects the scope of its playfields? All former contestants who vied for the 1,000 kronur prize died somewhere in its 80 levels. Now players that accept the challenge are warned: They face almost certain destruction or mental breakdown.

Those are the rumors reported in the manual. But it's possible the players haven't been heard from again for other reasons. They may have just gone home.

*Titan* features a ball bouncing from wall to wall in continuous motion and a faceted control unit plinking away almost every ob-



Life in the 22nd century is dominated by an evil game called *Titan*, brought to your computer screen by Titus.



Different from most ball-and-paddle games, *Titan* takes you through 80 elaborate levels of wall-wacking action.

stacle tile it encounters. The on-screen control unit, a square, multidirectional paddle directed by mouse, joystick or arrow keys, redirects the power sphere to clear the blocks. When all tiles are removed from one level, the next begins.

Sound like a few dozen other wall-bashers? Despite the similarities to other entertainment of this type, there are significant differences that make *Titan* intriguing to ball-and-paddle gamers. The biggest change, besides the cooperative aspect between ball and control unit, is that the control unit stays in the middle of the screen while the surrounding playfield scrolls like mad in all directions. The play area on each level can be substantially larger than the viewscreen, and the bashing ball can be, and often is, doing its thing completely out of view.

The ball's movement is limited to the eight cardinal directions: up, down, left, right and the diagonals, and without player intervention, it can get locked in endless cycles. The directional limitations for the sphere lend themselves to linear loops, and while some play-speed variation is possible, the ball remains in constant motion.

Some of the on-screen obstacles are more than just passive barriers; bumping into a skull won't just kill you! Specifically, glomming one of these ghoulish grinners aborts the session, negates any score accumulated in that level and restarts play. This requires that the player try to stay with the ball, keeping it in view and (hopefully) out of trouble. 'Taint easy, McGee.

The playfield graphics are geometrically interesting, even innovatively, largely because of judicious use of tiling techniques. Varied obstacles have different characteristics. There are tiles that the power sphere can ignore but the control unit can't pass, and vice versa. There are some tiles that only allow passage a limited number of times. Others can be eliminated only by the sphere or the control unit, but not both.

If an energizer tile is hit by the control unit, it changes the locations of both the unit and the sphere. Some indestructible elements can be pushed around by the control unit. These let the player close off areas or passageways to the sphere. On-screen oil spots prevent the control unit from changing direction until it halts its slide by hitting an obstacle.

Tiles are increasingly difficult to dispose of as the levels get higher and the playfields get larger. Scoring opportunities also rise dramatically, since each destroyed obstacle garners 100 times the level number.

*Titan* has one touch that may be unique. The player can enter a number from 1 to 9 to represent his name, then play or replay at any level attained under that number. The disk keeps record not only of the high scores, but also of levels attained by each numbered player. This is okay, but the system would be nicer if it used the player's name instead of a numeral.

The scrolling is smooth and the play fast. The graphics are wild, and the levels varied. *Titan* could be endlessly fascinating; but the control unit is difficult to master. Its interaction with the power sphere seems awkward. Hitting the ball sends it in the opposite direction of the push. This is counterintuitive at best and extremely frustrating in tight situations. Normally, the sphere bounces off the control unit, but under some circumstances the paddle captures and holds it in place. Yet it can't be taken anywhere. Moving the unit releases the ball—again, in the opposite direction.

*Titan* would have been a truly great game with just a little variation in the way the power sphere works. As it is, the incentive to work up to higher levels comes more from dogged determination than from any real fascination with what the next level has to offer.

**—Ross Chamberlain**

**Titus, 20432 Corisco Street, Chatsworth, CA 91311; (818) 709-3693.**

# Devon Aire in the Hidden Diamond Caper

## Epyx

Versions: Apple ($29.95), Atari ST ($34.95), Commodore 64 ($29.95), IBM PC ($39.95)

*Devon Aire in the Hidden Diamond Caper* is a joystick-driven action-adventure in which the player, cast as the debonair title character, must search a mansion for a collection of blue diamonds hidden throughout the house. Devon has been retained by Lady Crutchfield III, whose late husband, the out-

# CARRIER™ COMMAND




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Forget about relaxing. With 64 islands to capture, you'll barely have time to blink. Especially since a powerful enemy needs the islands' rich energy reserves as desperately as you do.

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And you can't sleep late when the free world is counting on you to lace all 64 islands into a mining, manufacturing and supply complex to ease a global energy crisis. The sooner the better.

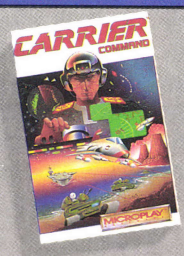
As a matter of fact, so much is happening so fast in Carrier Command that it's really two games in one. Strategy + Action. And you can choose which aspect of the game you want to emphasize each time you play.

Take your vacation later. You'll need the rest.

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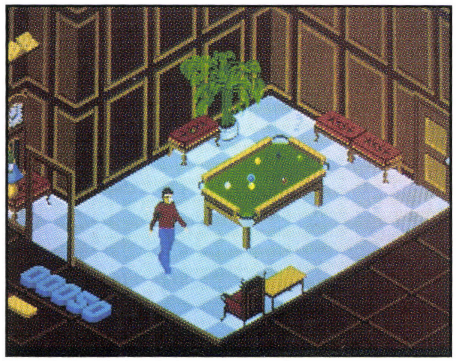
CIRCLE #167 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

rageously mad Montague, cached the gems then died before he could share the secret of their location with her. The distressed Lady C. remains in her room throughout the course of the game, and it is Devon's job to locate each of the diamonds and return them to her.

Crutchfield Manor is no milk run. The 16 diamonds are scattered among 50 rooms (there are only 12 rooms and 30 diamonds in the C-64 version) which must be carefully mapped and explored before the player can seriously attempt to accomplish the primary objective. Some of the rooms contain the remnants of Montague's wacko scientific experimentations. If Devon contacts any of these mutant mice and canaries, his life energy is drained.

Then there are the rooms themselves: physical puzzles stocked with chairs, tables and a variety of objects, some of which can be used to stave off the mutant creatures. Through a combination of joystick and keyboard commands, Devon can move the furniture and climb up on it in order to reach otherwise inaccessable parts of the room.

*Devon Aire* uses an impressive three-dimensional perspective similar to what one would see from a camera mounted near the ceiling in the northeast corner of each room. The visuals are strong on all three versions, even the C-64, but the ST and Amiga graphics attain a degree of beautiful realism superior even to Sierra's *Quest* games. The visuals are not without flaws, however. Several of the rooms are designed in such a way that the user cannot see Devon when he enters it. The player must then attempt to guide their unseen surrogate through an unknown corridor configuration without the slightest feedback, positive or negative. Only pure dumb luck or endless trial and error can succeed in such a scenario, and neither makes for a rewarding game experience.



**As Devon Aire, you have to retrieve Lady Crutchfield's missing diamonds, hidden by her late husband, and return them to her.**



***Devon Aire in the Hidden Diamond Caper,* by Epyx, has lavishly designed graphics to assist you in your detective quest for precious stones.**

For all its visual realism, *Devon Aire* employs some inexplicably whimsical game ideas. For example, if Devon picks up the phone while it's ringing, then "carries" it around with him, contact with the mutants does not drain his energy. Why a phone would render its owner invulnerable to danger is something the ridiculously scanty instructions never mention. Worse, when a game includes killer mice and contains a plethora of cheese slices, one would assume that the cheese could act as either a talisman against the mice or, if placed down, serve to distract them. Neither phenomenon occurs here. It is simply not playing fair with the user to make them guess at the nature and uses of objects in an entertainment, especially in a game that plays as fast and loose with logic as this one.

The biggest problem with *Devon Aire*, however, is its basically unsatisfying play mechanic. There are only two types of interaction Devon can have with an object: He can pick it up, and he can put it down. His inventory will only hold one object at a time. Experienced adventure gamers will constantly bemoan the lack of "examine" and "use" commands. There is something uncomfortably passive about this system, where Devon either has an object or he doesn't. If he has it, it may produce an effect, but since the instructions are so vague, only trial and error will reveal the nature of that effect. While limiting the user's information on a game increases its playlife, it does so in an artificial and undesirable way.

The rooms never change; nor do the locations of the hidden jewels, and this greatly hinders the game's replayability. As to the gems themselves, Devon can be literally standing on top of a gem and still be unable to pick it up, as with the diamond hidden behind the bathtub. This makes for some interesting physical puzzles, but also provides an unhealthy dose of frustration along the way.

*Devon Aire* is an intriguing offering. With some modification, the interface could prove extremely popular. The graphics already break new ground in state-of-the-art visual presentation. There are some flaws, but the virtues are considerable enough to make this game worth checking out.

**—Bill Kunkel**

**Epyx, P.O. Box 8020,**
**Redwood City, CA 94063; (415) 368-3200.**

# Battlehawks 1942

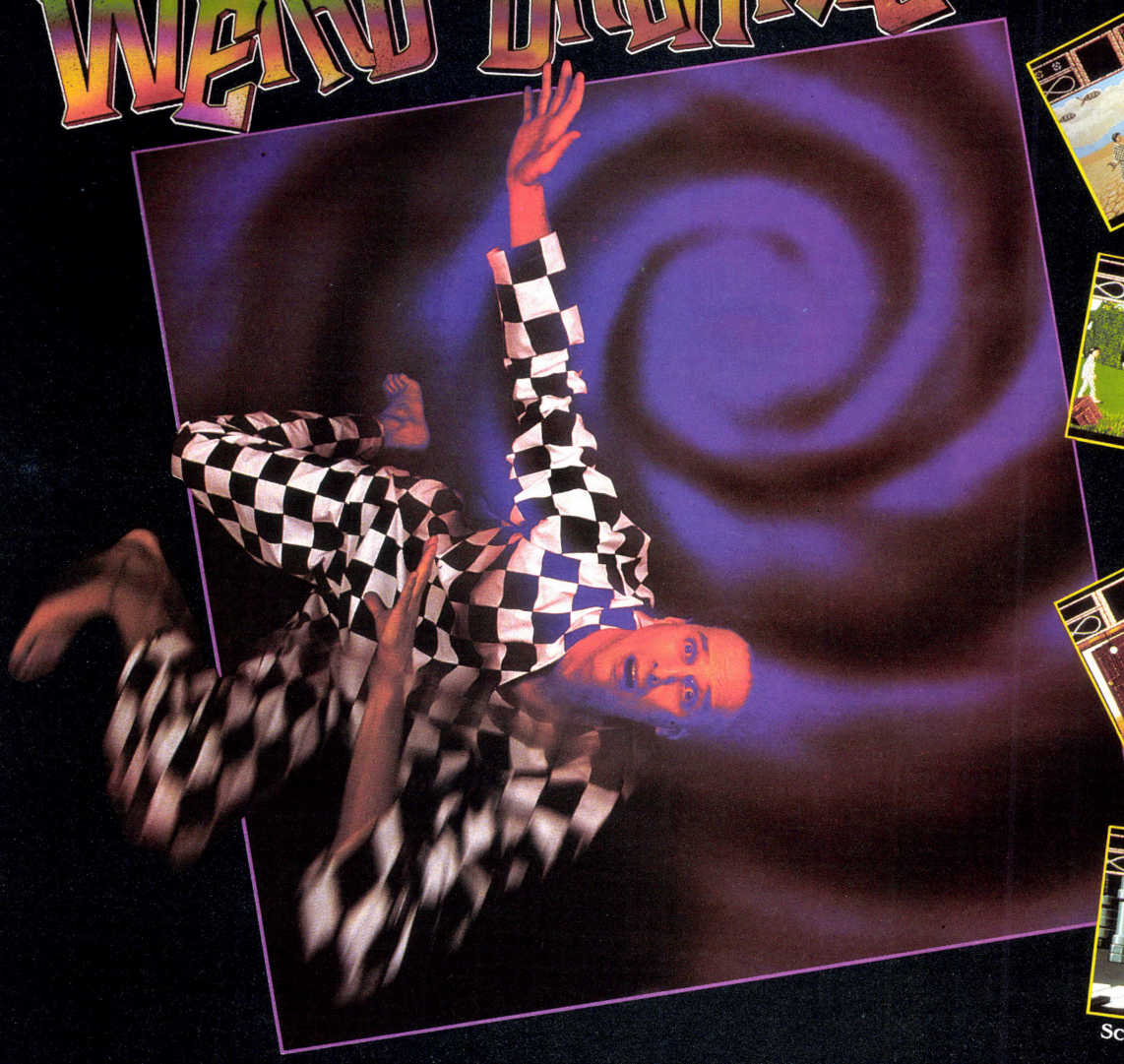
## Lucasfilm Games

Versions: Amiga ($49.95), Atari ST ($49.95), IBM PC ($49.95)

*Battlehawks 1942* is undoubtedly the finest WWII aerial combat simulator available to date. Unlike many flight simulators which focus on a single aircraft, *Battlehawks* lets players pilot one of the six primary carrier aircraft available during the period. Flying as an American, the player may choose the Grumman F4F-3 Wildcat fighter, the Douglas SBD-2 Dauntless dive bomber or the Grumman TBF-1 Avenger torpedo bomber. Japanese aviators select either the Mitsubishi A6M2 Zeke (also known as the Zero), the Aichi D3A1 Val dive bomber or the Nakajima Kate torpedo bomber. Each of these aircraft possess unique flight, maneuverability, firepower and durability characteristics which have been faithfully re-created. This versatility of aircraft selection, combined with 16 scenarios that may be played from either side, greatly enhances the staying power of this game.

Each aviator begins as a junior member of a squadron and attains promotions and decorations through skillful completion of missions. A service record tracks the number of air and surface kills, as well as craft lost, for a particular pilot through the course of his career.

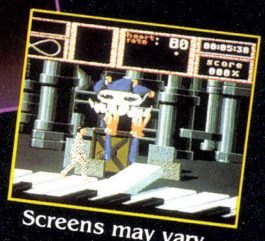
# WEIRD DREAMS™











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But not for Steve. His dreams are trying to kill him.

To survive he must escape the sometimes frightening,
sometimes laughable phantasms burrowing through his subconscious.

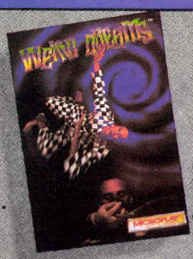
***Does major medical cover something like this?***

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MICROPLAY™ SOFTWARE

Coming soon for IBM-PC/Tandy/compatibles, C-64, Amiga, and Atari ST. Can't find Weird Dreams? Call (301) 771-1151 x208 weekdays 8:30 am - 5:30 pm EST. © 1989 MicroProse Software, Inc. © 1987 Best Ever Games Company. Co-conception: Herman Serrano and Tony King. Co-design: Herman Serrano, James Hutchby and Tony King.

CIRCLE #168 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Missions are chosen from the Battles of Coral Sea, Midway, Eastern Solomons and Santa Cruz Island. Each mission has an assigned difficulty rating ranging from easy to "impossible," with the more challenging ones yielding increased chances of promotion and decoration.

The program supports hard-disk installation and operates somewhat faster when so configured. A reference card makes start-up easy without reading the manual. The manual is definitely worth the extra time and effort, however, since it provides a wealth of information about platforms and tactics of the period, as well as a very detailed historical section on each of the battles portrayed. Copy protection is provided via a picture-recognition routine involving profiles of various Japanese aircraft located throughout the manual.

The IBM PC version of *Battlehawks* supports all graphics through VGA. Without exception, the graphic routines are smooth and among the finest available. Unlike modern aircraft simulators in which targets are often engaged by missiles at extreme ranges, this game requires players to get up close and personal with the enemy. Full 360° viewing is available from the cockpit and, at any given time, as many as 20 friendly and enemy aircraft may be visible, each actively pursuing its own mission. In other words, if the player chooses a dive-bombing mission, he'll be one of several aircraft seeking to sink an enemy carrier. The group he is with may have fighter escort aircraft assigned, and there will undoubtedly be enemy fighter interceptors seeking to spoil the day.

When the engagement begins—which is almost immediately, since Lucasfilm Games decided to exclude carrier takeoffs, landings and long periods of dead transit time—flak blossoms and tracer rounds fill the sky. Soon these images are joined by those of exploding aircraft, planes spinning out of control into the ocean and pilots parachuting to the sharks waiting below. Bombs and torpedoes strike home with gratifying explosions and a bellowing of smoke. This is somewhat less satisfying, however, if the explosion occurs on the aircraft carrier you were protecting!

An on-board flight camera allows players to playback portions of their missions and view the maneuvers from varying angles. This provides a movielike feel to the game. It also lets the player witness his own mistakes from a unique perspective, so as to improve tactics accordingly.

It's not necessary to play the game in lockstep chronological order, and the same mission can be replayed several times in a single career. However, the best results come from participation in all 16 scenarios. If the player manages to survive any combination of 16 total missions and doesn't lose too many aircraft in the process, he is retired and his service record closed. If simulation of a pilot's progress throughout the entire campaign is desired, it is best to simply play the missions in order.

*Battlehawks 1942* definitely sets new standards for depth-of-play options in flight simulators. Additionally, it provides a welcome change of pace for keyboard aviators suffering from Mach 2+ jet-lag. Join us once again as we return to a time when it was still possible to see the whites of your enemies' eyes; when altitude and angle of attack were the determining factors for dogfighting; a time before over-the-horizon kills. *Battlehawks 1942* provides a much-needed time capsule of this era, and it is a trip well worth taking.

**—Ed Dille**



Lucasfilm's *Battlehawks 1942* lets you pilot one of six powerful World War II aircraft in a high-quality battle simulator.

**Lucasfilm Games, P.O. Box 10307, San Rafael, CA 94912; (415) 662-1800.**

# Omni-Play Horse Racing

## SportTime

Versions: Amiga ($49.95), IBM PC ($49.95)

SportTime's new *Omni-Play* series represents one of the boldest experiments in the history of computer gaming. The idea is that entertainment software can be *expandable*, much as business software is. To quote designer Ed Ringler: ". . .your best games just keep getting better. Through available Option Modules, you can add new features, game styles, utilities and much more—when you want them and only if you want them."

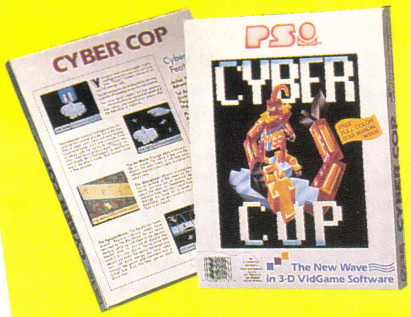
Case in point: *Omni-Play Horse Racing*, the first in the series, includes the basic *Omni-Play* game system and two modules. The modules are "Track 1," containing the graphics for various racetracks and stables around the circuit, and "The Handicapper's Tournament," in which up to four players can compete in a single-day betting contest.

Future modules include: "The Stable Owners," where users compete to breed, train and sell the best horseflesh in the world; "Fantasy Betting," a variation on the Handicapper's Tournament in which the user goes up against the best bettors in the world; "Historical Racing," an opportunity to watch and bet on such storied equines as Man-O-War, Nashua and Secretariat; and "Jockey Competition," in which the user actually mounts a horse and attempts to ride it to victory. In all, ten modules are planned, though there's no actual reason why there couldn't be an infinite number, so long as the game players remain interested.

Frankly, horse racing seems a questionable subject for such extended treatment. Though there is no shortage of racing fans, how well their demographics overlap with computer gamers remains to be seen. For this reviewer, the Handicapper's Tournament was an exceedingly dry exercise. Non-basketball fans can enjoy a rousing game of computer hoops because even if one doesn't especially enjoy watching others play roundball, the idea of personally—or through a computer surrogate—stuffing that ball through the metal rim is an exciting *idea*. The concept of betting on horses for imaginary money, however, lacks that same visceral *oomph*.

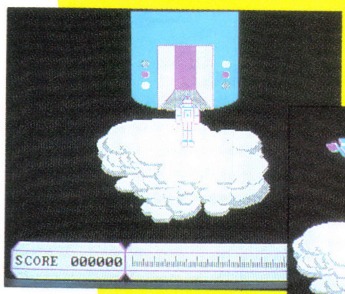
Let's face it: The handicapper is *not* one of pro sports' big fantasy figures. The image of a cigar smoking, middle-aged man in poor health, standing in line at the track with a tip sheet clenched in his sweaty paw is not exactly the kind of image that stirs the blood. There is, therefore, precious little juice to be squeezed from a *simulation* of such an experience.

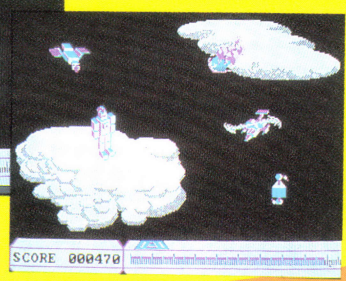
# The Law of Competition Insures The Survival of the Fittest!

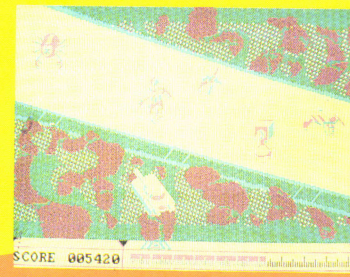


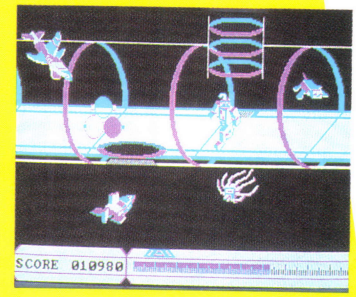

**Cyber Cop** takes 3-D Vidgame software to new heights in this exciting, fast-paced, arcade action adventure. You are the Law and the Rebels are ready for you. Will you survive? Find out now, at your local software retailer or order direct from PSI.

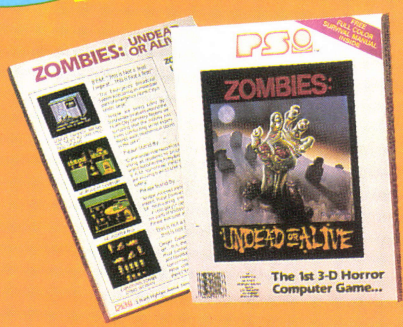
***Multi-level Play Action—**
**Challenges Novices**
**& Experts Alike!**



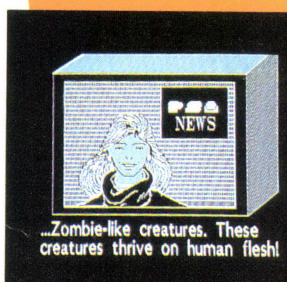



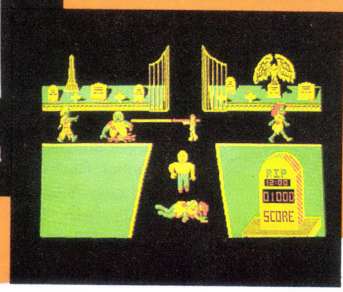



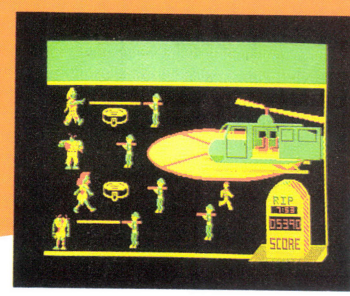




**Zombies: Undead or Alive!** gives new meaning to horror. It's the first 3-D Horror Vidgame! The realism is astonishingly frightening. The action is increasingly fast-paced and gory. Only the fittest will survive. Can you? Find out now at your local software retailer or order direct from PSI.

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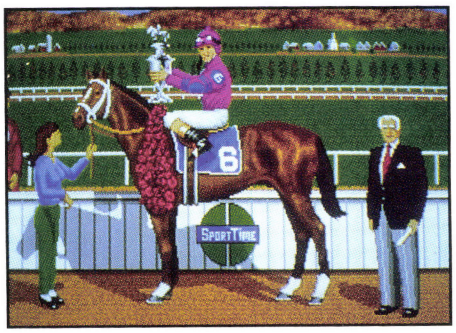
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*Omni-Play Horse Racing* leads the way for future entries in the *Omni-Play* sports series of computer contests.

The game itself is solid, if dry, much like those business simulations popular half a decade ago. The player examines data, whether it's reading form sheets or studying the horse and jockey histories. Tips can also be purchased from local touts. The user then opts to bet, using either the traditional win/place/show or the more exotic forms: exactas, quinellas and triples. These data screens are quite attractive and simple to use.

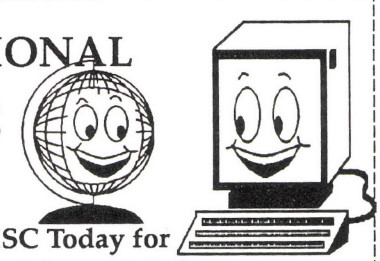
Finally, the race itself is run. While the screens from the Amiga version, shown on the back of the box, are beautiful, the IBM version reverts to CGA graphics for this crucial sequence, significantly reducing the game's only potentially exciting moments. The visual payoff of the race simply doesn't begin to evoke the beauty of the sport of kings.

Computerists interested in horse racing and its history and inner workings will probably think they've died and gone to pony heaven. Those who are strangers to the sport, however, are unlikely to be converted. Meanwhile, SportTime's next *Omni-Play* release will be *Basketball*, which should serve as a much better basis for judging this new game system.

**—Bill Kunkel**

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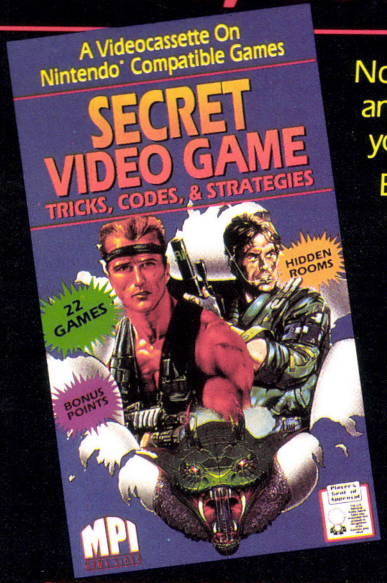


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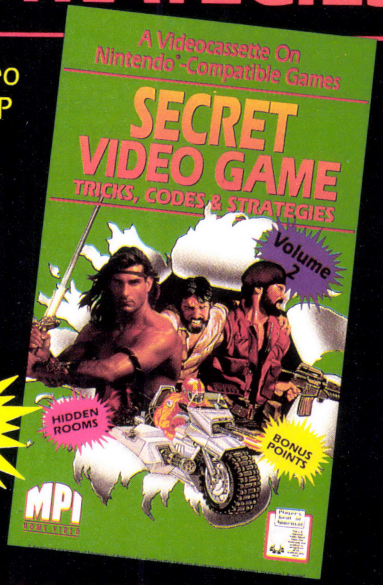
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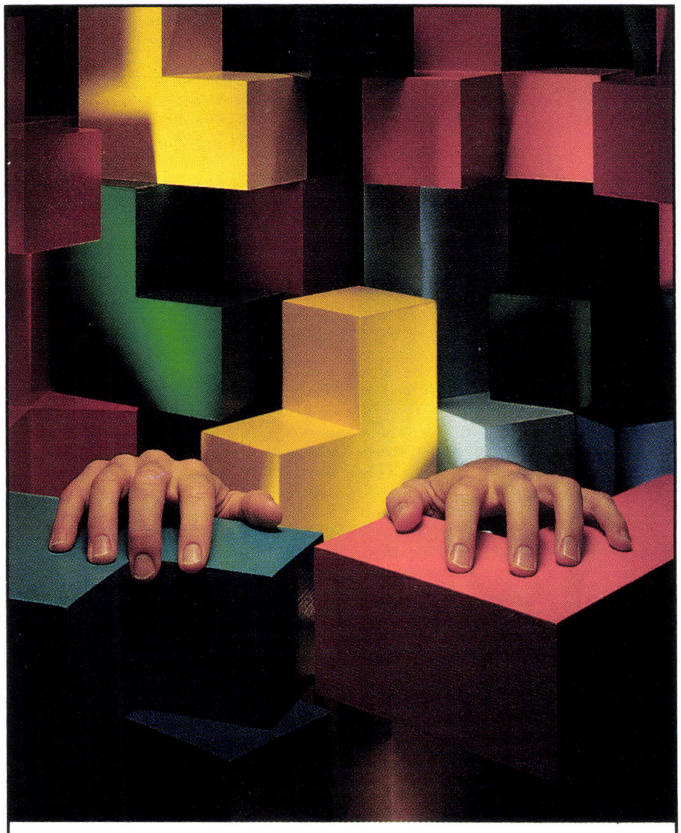
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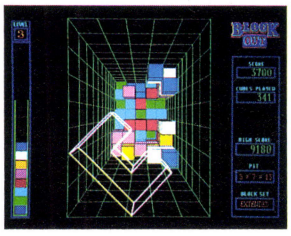
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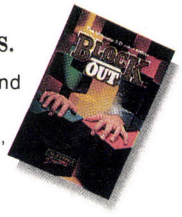
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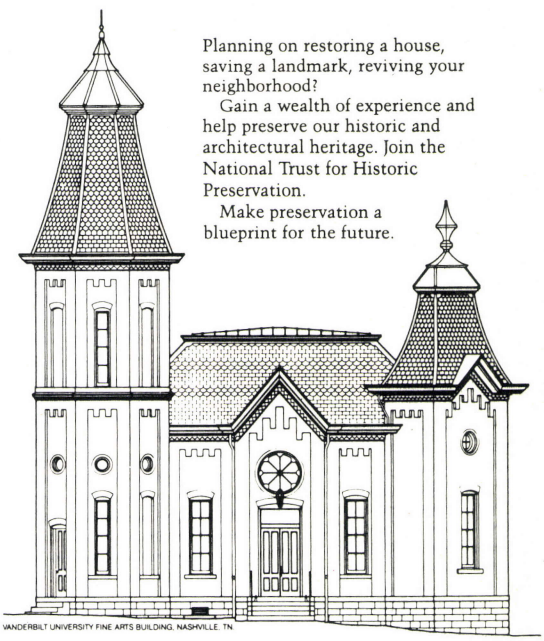
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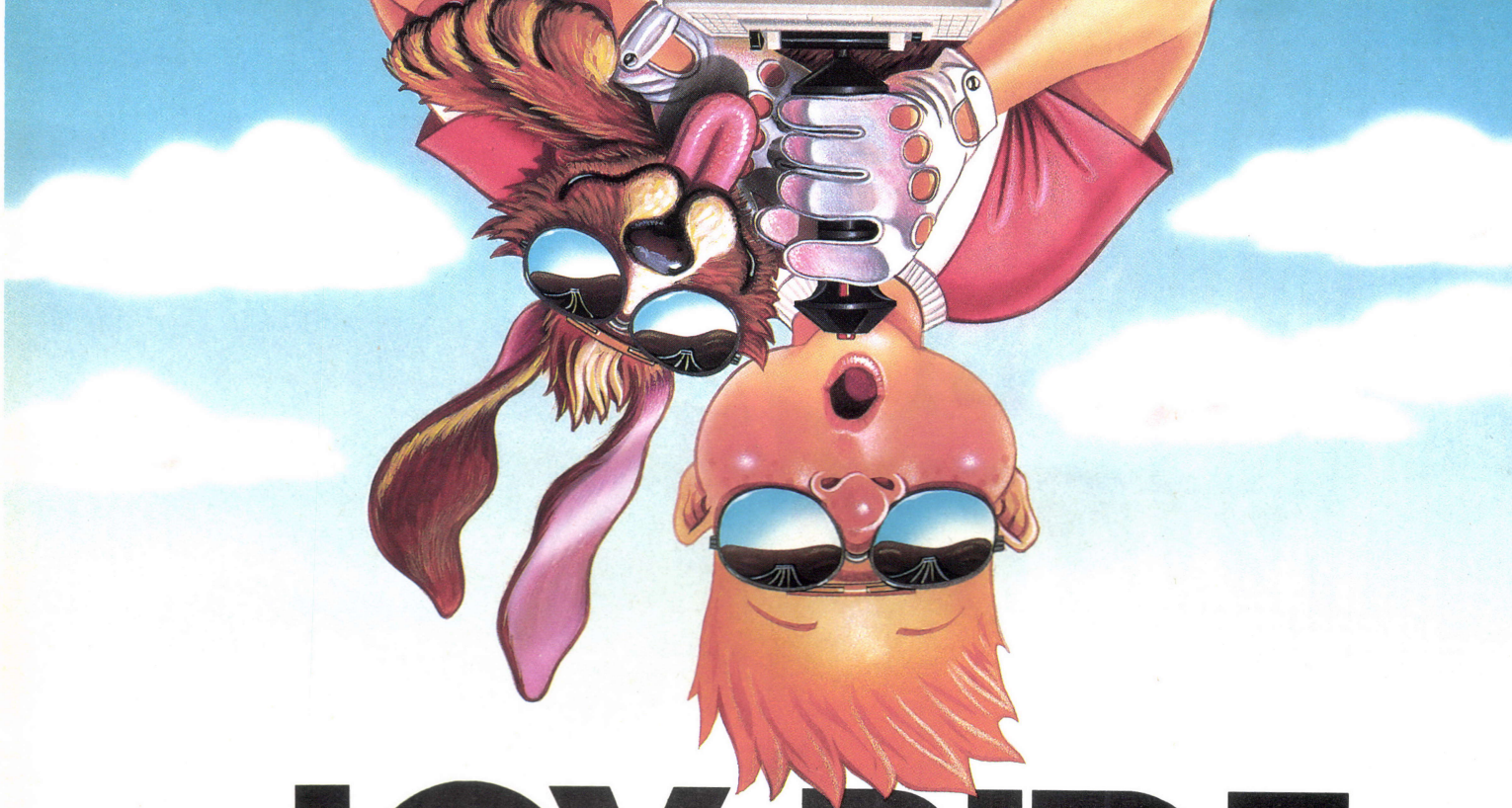

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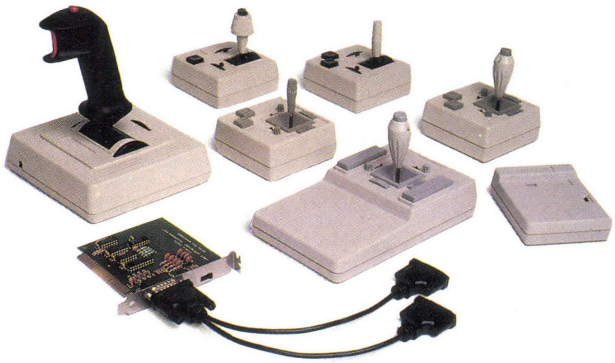
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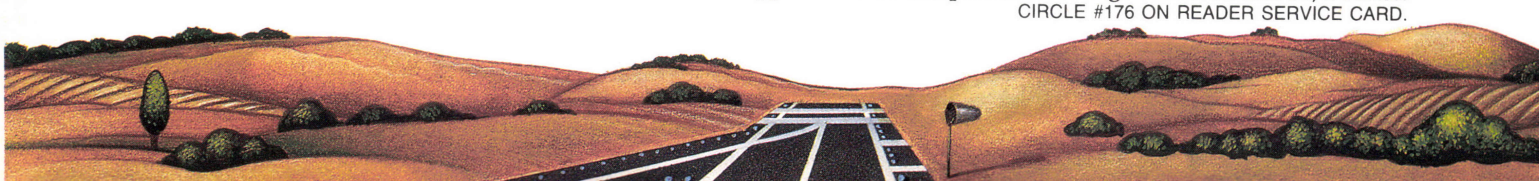
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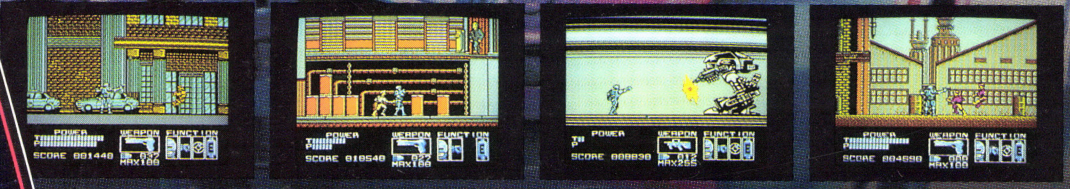
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